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If you happen to be in the fortunate position to spend upwards of £35,000 on a car then I implore you to take a good, long, hard look at a used F10 M5. I'd argue that this really is the stand out BMW bargain of the current model range and it's seriously hard to ignore the staggering value for money that it offers. For your money you get an eminently practical four-door saloon that's perfectly happy to potter down to the shops in full-auto mode yet has the capability to thrill like so few other machines on the road when the fancy takes you.

Not only is it a staggering performer, it's also absolutely packed to the gunwales with standard equipment – Professional sat nav, electronic dampers, Head-Up Display, four-zone air conditioning, full leather... the list is seemingly endless and many M5s will have also had their comprehensive list of standard kit added to by the first owner.

As any new car owner will tell you depreciation is public enemy number one, but for the second-hand buyer it's your best buddy – many of these cars have shed £50k from their list prices in three to four years making them staggeringly good value for money. Of course, an M5 will never return diesel-like economy, road tax is a relatively hefty £490 a year, and insurance will no doubt be a few rungs up the ladder from a 520d, too. However, standard servicing won't be quite as wallet-wilting as you might expect, especially if you're prepared to shop around. Also the depreciation curve should have settled down slightly now as the worst hit has already been taken.

So far the M5 has earned itself a reputation for being generally very reliable but we still reckon that for ultimate peace of mind you buy one either from a main dealer with an Approved Used Warranty or buy a BMW warranty for a car that isn't currently covered. Yes, this all adds to the overall cost but just remember what you're getting in return – a stunning four-door saloon with nigh-on supercar performance. Even if you only hold onto it for a year at least you'll be able to remember when you owned the ultimate super saloon. We wouldn't wait too much longer before doing it, though, as these are staggeringly complex cars and in a few years down the line when they're throwing up multiple fault codes and potential repair costs are spiralling we don't reckon many of us will be able to afford to run one without a warranty.

As an all-round performer the car really has no peers and I often muse over whether I could get away with running one... surely Mrs H would just think it's another large four-door BMW?

Bob Harper, Editor



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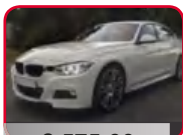


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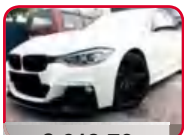
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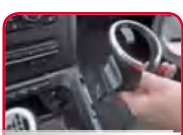
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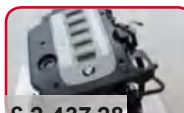
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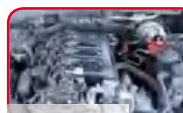
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M3 and M4 Competition Package

If you'd like your M3 or M4 to be a little more feisty BMW has the answer with its new Competition Package

BMW's policy of bringing out a more performance-orientated version of its M cars via a Competition Package has certainly been successful and with the E92 generation of M3 there was a high uptake of the option once it became available. It's obviously hoping the same will be true for the latest turbocharged M cars as from this spring you will be able to add the Competition pack to the M3 Saloon and both the M4 Coupé and Convertible.

There's plenty on offer too, with the Competition pack promising performance, style and handling enhancements. Power is up to 450hp (a gain of 19hp) and while torque remains the same at 406lb ft, performance is up for all models, with the manual-equipped machines reaching 62mph from rest 0.1 seconds faster. With the optional M DCT transmission, both the M3 and M4 can now knock off the benchmark sprint in four seconds.

While the latest M car has been developing a reputation for struggling to put its power down in slippery conditions, BMW will be hoping that its chassis revisions for the Competition pack goes some way to allaying those reservations. The pack includes Adaptive M suspension, which has been extensively tuned and enhanced and features new springs, dampers and anti-roll bars, along with reconfigured driving modes (Comfort,

Sport and Sport+). The standard Active M differential on the rear axle and DSC Dynamic Stability Control have also been configured to match the upgraded dynamics. Furthermore, the Competition pack gains a set of GTS style alloys, though thankfully without the orange 'highlights'. BMW says these are 'forged, machine-polished and weight- and rigidity-optimised'. The alloys measure 20-inches in diameter and have mixed tyres – 265/30 R20 and 285/30 R20 front and rear respectively.

Ensuring it sounds as well as it goes is a new M Sports exhaust with black chrome tailpipes which promises a better soundtrack which BMW says will bring 'added emotional resonance to the driving experience' and has a 'distinctive burble on overrun'. Externally you'll also be able to spot the Competition pack cars by their extended BMW Individual high-gloss Shadow Line exterior trim which adorns the side window trims, window recess finishers, exterior mirror frames and bases, kidney grille, side gills and the model badge on the tail.

Internally the Competition pack includes special lightweight M sports seats that BMW says combine perfect support under extremely hard driving with exceptional comfort on long journeys. The last touch are the seatbelts with woven-in BMW M stripes which are a nice touch.

The Competition Package costs £3000 and can be ordered now for spring deliveries.





Carbon wheels for M4 GTS

There's no getting away from the fact that the M4 GTS will be a stunning driver's car – even if some of its styling could be classed as a little dubious – and to enhance the driving experience BMW has now launched the M Carbon Compound wheels that it mentioned in its original press release for the car.

These rims – the first for a BMW road car – offer a significant reduction in unsprung and rotating masses creating a positive effect on the

car's acceleration and deceleration, steering responses and vibration levels.

The M Carbon Compound wheels are constructed from a CFRP/aluminium-composite and knock around seven kilograms off the GTS's kerb weight. The wheels measure 9.5x19 inches at the front and 10.5x20 inches at the rear and come with 265/35 ZR19 and 285/30 ZR20 Michelin Pilot Sport 2 rubber that has been especially tailored for the M4 GTS.



Updates for the X3, X4 and 6 Series

New equipment options have now become available for both the X3 and X4 models which include telephony with wireless charging and the wi-fi hotspot function. Working together with the optional Professional Navigation system, the iDrive operating system now also offers innovative menu graphics for the Control Display in both models, using tile symbols arranged side-by-side, à la new 7 Series.

The Chestnut Bronze metallic shade will be introduced as a new exterior paint finish for both cars and a range of new optional light-alloy wheels will also be available.

For the 6 Series there will be similar upgrades as the middle-range X models – including the wireless 'phone charging and the wi-fi hotspot as well as the new-style 7 Series display for the iDrive screen.

i8 Spyder reimagined

Car manufacturers are increasingly introducing new technology concepts at the Consumer Electronics Show and this year BMW brought along its 'i Vision Future Interaction', a reworked i8 Spyder

While the awkwardly-named i Vision Future Interaction might look like a cross between an i8 and a Z1 the focus of this new take on the i8 Spyder isn't to do with unbridled driving pleasure, it's more a possible window into the future in which BMW sees its vehicles as highly automated machines. The ultimate goal is 'Vision Zero', the idea of accident-free individual mobility, and to this end the car features three different drive modes – 'Pure Drive', 'Assist' and 'Auto Mode' which offer differing degrees of vehicle intervention in the driving process.

BMW says that its Pure Drive mode meets the typical BMW high aspiration for sheer driving pleasure at all times, with the car's assistance systems used passively, only giving warning alerts without actually intervening in the control of the vehicle. The Assist setting provides optimum networking with the surrounding environment. The best route is calculated in real time and fed into the navigation system. The vehicle supports the driver's performance and intervenes actively if there is danger of an event such

as an accident, or if an obstacle on the road appears to be a safety risk.

When the car is in Auto Mode, the vehicle itself takes over control of sideways and forward orientation, accelerates independently, brakes and steers – without the driver having to intervene at all. BMW says that this sort of driving could soon become a reality and may be permitted on certain approved stretches of road, such as sections of German motorways or in Car Pool Lanes in the USA.

The BMW i Vision Future Interaction proactively gives drivers an alert if they are in a zone for highly automated driving. The driver can then change the drive mode as appropriate. The steering wheel is illuminated in blue in the highly automated drive mode. The colour scheme therefore provides a visual cue that the driver is in this drive mode. If the vehicle leaves the approved lane for highly automated driving and has to take control of the steering wheel again, a red light signal conveys this requirement. The BMW i Vision Future Interaction is



therefore already providing an indication today of what the control functions might look like in the future in highly automated vehicles.

Of course, if the 'driver' isn't actually driving, this gives him or her plenty of time to do other things and it's for this reason that most manufacturers at the Consumer Electronic Show were touting the 'connected' car as being the next big thing with some cars on show being able to do bizarre things like



Remote Parking for the 7 Series

Remote control parking will be available for all new 7 Series models from March. This globally unique option allows the new BMW 7 Series to manoeuvre in or out of forward-parking spaces or garages without anyone at the wheel. The driver initiates the car's semi-automated progress forwards into or in reverse out of a space from outside the car using the BMW Display Key.

Additional Individual equipment options will be also be available from March 2016 which allow further individualisation of the luxury saloon. The

range of exterior colours will expand to include the BMW Individual special paint finishes Brilliant white metallic, Frozen Dark brown metallic, Pure metal silver and Frozen Arctic grey metallic, and the BMW Individual paint finishes Ruby black metallic, Moonstone metallic, Azurite black metallic and Almandine brown metallic.

Also now available are BMW Individual fine-grain Merino full leather in six colour combinations, BMW Individual interior in Piano black and BMW Individual fine wood trim in two exclusive variants.





inform you of the contents of your fridge, presumably so you can see if you have the required ingredients for the recipe you've just found online while cruising in fully automated mode.

Fortunately BMW hasn't completely given up on the driver yet and as a result the CES Vision car has plenty of items focussed purely on the driver such as an advanced head-up display and an instrument cluster with a three-dimensional display. However, it's the central panorama display that's the most striking item inside the i8 Spyder and it's pretty huge, being 11 centimetres high and 40 centimetres across with a diagonal length of 21 inches. When in Pure Drive mode the screen's functionality would be limited, but when in Auto Mode it can stream video or display any other web content.

The screen is controlled by what BMW describes as 'AirTouch', gesture control for all communication, information and entertainment functions in the vehicle. It allows the big screen to be operated like a touchscreen – without actually having to touch it.

Sensors are installed in the area of the dashboard panel which responds to hand movements. A movement of the hand can be used to go to a position on the panorama display and the selected icon is highlighted visually. If the hand is moved forward (push gesture), the icon is activated or the menu displays the next level.

Overall the i Vision Future Interaction is an interesting show car but only time will tell how soon the autonomous driving side of things will come to fruition – some experts predict we will have 10 (or even 20) million plus autonomous cars on the roads by 2020. The next few years will certainly be interesting that's for sure!



New engines for the 4 Series

The 3 Series received its LCI changes towards the tail end of 2015 and with it came a series of engine upgrades so it was only a matter of time before these same engines made their debut in the 4 Series Coupé, Convertible and Gran Coupé.

The flagship of the 4 Series range will now be the 440i that uses the new generation of six-cylinder TwinPower turbo units rated at 326hp and 332lb ft of torque endowing the automatic 440i Coupé with a blisteringly quick 0-62mph time of just 5.0 seconds while at the same time economy and emissions are said to both be improved by up to 12 per cent compared to the outgoing 435i.

Like the 3 Series the 428i has now been replaced by a 430i which uses the most powerful incarnation of the new 2.0-litre four-cylinder

engine, rated at 252hp and 258lb ft of torque. It's no slouch either with a sub-six second 0-62mph time for the Coupé yet it still has the ability of returning over 50mpg according to the combined cycle for an eight-speed auto 430i Coupé.

The entry-level four-cylinder petrol hasn't been forgotten about either as it also receives the new modular engine but in a reduced state of tune at 184hp.

Last, but by no means least, for the 4 Series is a new version of the 425d that features a new 2.0-litre TwinPower turbo engine developing 224hp and 332lb ft of torque, enough to endow the Coupé version with a 0-62mph time of just 6.1 seconds when mated to the automatic transmission yet again sees economy and emissions improve by around eight per cent.

BMW's best ever sales

The BMW Group has confirmed that 2015 was indeed its best ever year and here in the UK it did particularly well boosting its sales by 14 per cent over 2014's total. Nearly 231,000 new BMW and MINI vehicles were registered, helping the BMW Group to achieving a market share of 8.7 per cent of the total UK car market in 2015.

BMW i brand saw sales grow by more than 80 per cent compared to the previous year and overall the BMW brand sold 167,000 vehicles with the most popular model being the 116d five-door hatch which accounted for 28,000 registrations.





Saxon Motorsport plans for 2016

Some of you may remember our feature on Saxon Motorsport back in the April 2015 issue where we visited the company to discover the story behind its 1 Series race cars. The team was mentioned again in our race report on the Nürburgring 24 Hour race where it was leading its class until a crash during the night put them out of contention (although they managed to claw their way back up to third position) but in the season closer it won its class at the Barcelona 24 Hour race despite ending up in a class containing supposedly faster machinery.

This year we're going to follow Saxon's progress as it further develops its trio of 1 Series racers and enters them in a variety of events. Currently on the cards is the GT Cup Championship (UK-based, 23 rounds over eight race weekends) with its Hybrid Gas Diesel 1 Series and it's also committed to doing plenty of endurance events too, including selected rounds of the VLN Championship at the Nordschliefe. There will also be plenty of 24 hour racing for the Saxon team with entries confirmed for Silverstone (2/3 April), Nürburgring (28/29 May), Paul Ricard (16/17 July) and Barcelona (3/4 September).

As we're currently in the closed season for the majority of motorsport there's little in the way of track action to report, but that doesn't mean there isn't a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes with Saxon currently sorting out technical niggles, coming up with performance upgrades and planning new livery for its cars and trucks. We spoke to team principal Nick Barrow about some of the work that's currently going on in the background: "On the

technical front we made a decision after our last test of 2015 to proceed with a development programme of the newer N57S engine [for the diesel race car]. This engine has various advantages over the reliable M57TU that we've used in a lot of our previous races.

"The N57S is more powerful – 440hp – and it's lighter and cools better, too. But it also has some weaknesses. It has an inherent vibration, the oil pump is suspect at continued high revs and the head bolts stretch when exposed to the level of boost that we run. To this end we have just finished building an engine into which our chief engineer, Jon Taylor, has managed to fit a racing type oil pump in to the sump. This development motor also has some piston modifications that we believe will increase our power even further. Whilst this is going on we have commissioned Arrow to design and manufacture some new crankshafts for us to cure the vibration issue. We've also commissioned ARP in the States to design and manufacture some uprated head bolts to handle the high cylinder pressures."



One issue that Saxon ran into last year was a problem with exhaust manifolds cracking, probably due to the vibration when it experimented with the N57S engine, but not wanting to take any chances it's making changes to the manifold design. The team's fabricator, Charlie Pennington, has been manufacturing some new exhaust manifolds, having managed to source some 321 stainless steel in the size and wall thickness that it required and also finding someone who could bend it to the tight radius that the team needed.

As well as the brace of diesel-engined cars, Saxon is also keen to further develop its V10-engined 1 Series as Nick explained: "Alongside these projects on our diesel and diesel-hybrid cars, we are also progressing with the V10 version of our 1 Series race cars. Following a season of development, sorting teething issues such as big end bearings and pulley alignment whilst racing in the Britcar series, we are planning an assault on the Nürburgring Nordschliefe circuit in the VLN Series.

"This car has the same bespoke suspension, sequential paddle-shift Drenth gearbox and Drexler differential as the diesel cars and should be a formidable machine around the 14-mile track. The increased speed of this car proved too much for the ABS system as fitted to the diesel cars so we have fitted a Bosch Motorsport ABS system which will be tested shortly. I am looking forward to putting it to the test, with various drivers expressing interest in joining the team throughout the year." We'll bring you more updates on the team's progress next month.

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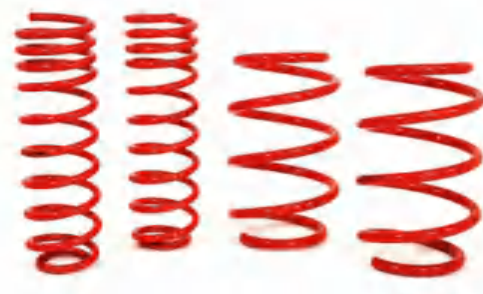


AC Schnitzer's X6M conversion

AC Schnitzer UK now has all the parts in stock to turn your X6M into a serious fire-breathing monster, complete with 650hp engine upgrade and a serious dose of attitude thanks to its 'Falcon' wide-arch kit. Some of the conversion highlights include 22-inch AC1 wheel and tyre sets in bi-colour or anthracite finish, suspension lowering springs, the aforementioned 650hp performance upgrade, an exhaust (with or without valves) and with chrome or matt black 90mm diameter tailpipes, a new front skirt, carbon rear diffuser, the previously mentioned Falcon wide-arch kit and a number of interior items, too.

You can either cherry pick from the various parts available or go the whole hog and have the complete conversion carried out – the choice is yours. For full pricing details visit the AC Schnitzer UK website or give the helpful chaps a call.

Contact: www.ac-schnitzer.co.uk



E38 V-Maxx Sports Springs

Two new different spring setups have been released by V-Maxx for the venerable E38 7 Series to suit both ride-levelling and standard damper-equipped vehicles. The kits have been designed to be a direct replacement for each model's factory springs and will work effectively with the OEM dampers – or any quality aftermarket offerings.

The company says its kits for the E38 are wound from the very same steel that it uses for its competition springs and these are pre-stressed to prevent sagging, before being shot-peened for tempering and then electrostatically powdercoated for a long life. The springs lower the E38 by approximately 35mm and have full TÜV certification. All models are catered for, including non-UK models such as the 725tds.

Price: £220.80

Contact: 0845 060 3020 or www.v-maxx.co.uk



F8x M3/M4 CATuned coilovers

New from California-based BMW parts specialist, CATuned, comes this set of coilovers for the latest M3 and M4 models.

As with all CATuned coilovers, they centre around a 30-way adjustable monotube damper, which is specifically matched to the 8kg and 13kg front/rear spring rates respectively. CATuned says careful development went into the spring rates to ensure the coilovers deliver the perfect balance of comfort and much-improved handling over the stock setup and they offer a huge range of height adjustment as well.

Price: \$2219/£1890

Contact: www.catuned.com



KW height-adjustable springs

This height adjustable KW spring kit enables the M4 to be lowered to varying degrees, something that's not possible with traditional springs. KW discovered during tests with the new M4 that when traditional springs were fitted that lowered the car by more

than 35mm, there wasn't any suspension travel left, so these height adjustable springs will drop the car between 5mm and 25mm. The kit's supplied with new bump stops and dust covers and has been specifically designed to work with the M4's

adjustable dampers. Kits are also available for the M3, M5 and M6.

Price: £540

Contact: 0870 990 7536 or www.kwautomotive.co.uk



Fidanza Performance short-shift kits

American performance expert, Fidanza, has now made its recently launched short-shift kits available for BMW applications, with UK customers able to purchase them from Cambridge Motorsport and Fensport. Fidanza says the kits have been designed for a factory-like fit but offer a 40 per cent reduction in throw, which means quicker shifting thanks to the stalk's unique shape and length. All Fidanza shifters are machined from 6061 billet aluminium and hardened steel for optimal performance and durability.

Contact: www.cambridgemotorsport.com or www.fensport.co.uk



Euro Car parts to stock Brembo brakes

Multi-award-winning Italian company, Brembo, supplies original braking products to a vast number of vehicle manufacturers (including BMW). It also boasts an illustrious history in motorsport, starting with Ferrari in 1975, and currently supplies every F1 team. So it's good news that Brembo brakes are now readily available from Euro Car Parts.

Sebastiano Rio, director of Brembo's aftermarket business unit, commented: "This exciting new relationship with Euro Car Parts represents a unique opportunity for Brembo to expand its presence in the UK. We have developed a huge range of premium aftermarket brake pads and discs, as well as other products like brake fluid, all of which come from the same state-of-the-art production plants as our OE parts. Our product, support and brand, combined with Euro Car Parts' dedication and unrivalled distribution infrastructure, will raise the bar for quality in the UK braking aftermarket."

Contact:

www.eurocarparts.com



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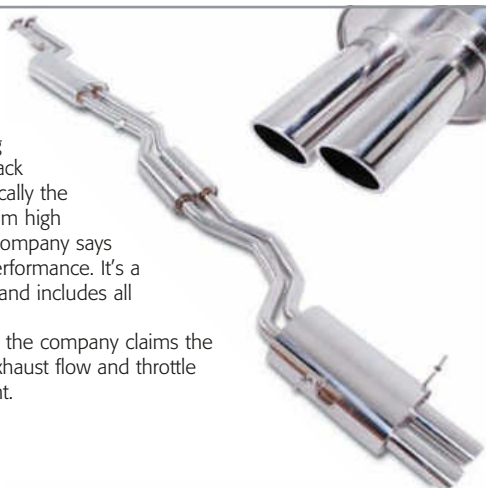
Direnza E46 cat-back exhaust

Direnza has added to its impressive range of tuning products with the addition of a stainless steel cat-back exhaust system for the E46 3 Series Coupé, specifically the 320Ci, 323Ci, 325Ci and 328Ci. It's constructed from high quality mandrel-bent T304 stainless steel and the company says it's been fully polished and ported for maximum performance. It's a direct, bolt-on replacement for the original exhaust and includes all gaskets, bolts and clamps necessary to fit.

While the company has not released any figures, the company claims the exhaust gives a huge weight reduction, increases exhaust flow and throttle response and offers a guaranteed bhp improvement.

Price: £379.99

Contact: 0844 448 2002 or www.direnza.co.uk



Tarox uprated E36 M3 discs and pads

These new brake kits from Tarox offer a direct replacement for the OEM parts but, the company claims, with significantly greater performance and much less tendency to fade. Tarox says its discs are CNC machine-faced for the perfect braking surface, down to a tolerance of 0.015mm, not only resulting in the perfect performance, but also the perfect finish to accentuate the overall look of the car.

Four styles are available: the OEM-esque 'Zero' with its factory good looks for the concours purist or collector, the diagonally vented 'G88', the JDM inspired 'Sport Japan' and the classic, spirally grooved 'F2000'.

To accompany the discs the company reckons its 'Strada' pads offer the perfect compromise for cars that are driven daily with excellent cold performance, instant bite and great wear rates. For those M3s still being enjoyed on track, or for fast road work, the Corsa pads are recommended, while drivers looking to keep their M3s in race trim would be pointed in the direction of the Competizione. Tarox offers every application available for both 3.0 and 3.2 models.

Price: From £318.00 (pair of 315mm discs); from £85.20 (Strada pads)

Contact: 01706 222872 or www.tarox.co.uk



Eibach 1 and 2 Series chassis upgrades

If you're looking to improve the handling of your 1 or 2 Series, Eibach has brought out a number of upgrades to do just that. Its Pro-Kit springs offer a 25mm drop at the front and 30mm at the back (25mm all-round for xDrive models), and have been designed to work perfectly with the factory dampers for handling and ride comfort. For a more aggressive drop, look no further than the Sportline kit, which will lower your car by 40mm all-round, with more performance-biased spring rates to further sharpen handling and reduce body roll.

If that's not enough, Eibach's anti-roll bar kit will further reduce body roll, with two-way adjustability allowing you to adjust the level of roll control while the front bar's hollow construction offers a 40 per cent weight saving over stock. Finally, for those looking for a bit more stance, Eibach's stylish black Pro-Spacers (which feature a black anodised coating) are available in widths from 4-30mm per side.

Price: Pro-Kit £189.12;

Sportline kit £182.40;

Anti-roll bar kit £372;

Pro-Spacers from £41 each

Contact: 01455 285851

or www.eibach.com





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Baby grows up fast

BMW coupé buyers considering a low-end 4 Series should take a long hard look at a well-specified 2 Series Coupé instead – it's a cracker

Words: Shane O' Donoghue Photography: Max Earey



Several years ago I was testing the then-new 1 Series Coupé. It was a high-spec 123d model and I loved it. At dinner with friends I was asked about it and they were all enthusiastic about it until one of them realised it was badged '1 Series'. "But you could have a basic 3 Series for that price," was the comment and no talking to the group could convince them that a sporty 1 Series is far more interesting. It seems that badge snobbery is alive and well. I wonder what they'd make of the new 2 Series?

Ostensibly, this 2 Series Coupé is a direct replacement for the 1 Series Coupé, while the three- and five-door hatchbacks keep the 1 Series name. And the concept is the same: it's a sporty looking two-door shape with surprising practicality for four occupants and a decent amount of luggage. Within a few hundred metres it feels great to drive, even in 220d diesel guise as tested here.

There are high-powered petrol engines in the extensive line-up too of course, which starts at £23,040 on-the-road, but the diesels make more sense in terms of running costs. The entry-level diesel 2 Series Coupé is the 218d SE (from £25,100) and though it's down 40hp on the 220d we drove, it's still perfectly powerful enough for most. The 2.0-litre diesel engine is a little gruff these days in this application (even after its update last year), but it offers performance that lives up to the sporty looks allied with impressive official fuel economy of 65.7mpg – or 72.4mpg when fitted with the automatic transmission. The auto 220d is also officially a little more economical than the 218d in the same guise, oddly, but either car is remarkably economical in real world conditions, no matter how enthusiastic you are behind the wheel.

It's a car that'll encourage you to drive. All the control interfaces are beautifully weighted, response to the throttle is immediate, it moves with little in the way of slack or inertia and the low-slung driving position makes it feel suitably sporty. It's not much lighter than a 4 Series Coupé in truth, but it feels like it is and the reduced dimensions give it an added sense of agility too. The abilities go deep as well. That initial feeling of quick responses doesn't fall apart if you ask a little more of the chassis. Indeed, it gets better the harder you push it. A little more steering feedback would be welcome, but it's otherwise a well-weighted system (you can alter the assistance as ever via the toggle switch in the centre console) and direct enough to help make the nose of the coupé particularly keen to sniff out apexes.

Explore its limits and you'll discover that the car's relatively wide track and low centre of gravity mean exceptional composure through a sequence of bends. M Sport suspension is standard, with a lower ride height, but buyers can choose not to have it if they wish, in a bid to retain the standard car's comfort. In this car, fitted with the M Sport suspension, body roll is notable by its absence and there's absolutely loads of grip at all four corners. Pleasingly, the 2 Series Coupé feels rear-driven, so even when you're not pushing hard there's a sense of power going to the rear wheels, giving the car a satisfying attitude on the exit of tighter corners under power. Dig deeper and you'll discover that the rear axle produces plenty of traction in the dry, even if there is enough torque on tap to overcome the rear tyres if you really want it to. Due to the open rear differential it's not a car you'll learn to powerslide in, but it's fun nonetheless. In the wet, if you push on, it's still remarkably composed, though you'll notice the DSC light flashing in the





F22 220d M Sport Coupé

ENGINE: Four-cylinder, turbodiesel

CAPACITY: 1995cc

MAX POWER: 190hp @ 4000rpm

MAX TORQUE: 295lb ft @1750-2500rpm

0-62MPH: 7.0 seconds

TOP SPEED: 143mph

ECONOMY: 72.4mpg

EMISSIONS: 104g/km

PRICE: £31,385

Figures quoted are for the Sport automatic tested

instrument cluster with surprising regularity if you've a heavy right foot. Thankfully it's a very quick-witted system that aids progress – never does it feel frustrating or slow to react.

If you're going for the automatic transmission (and I'll whisper this, but it's a better car for it) then you really should upgrade to the Sport automatic option if you like driving, as it enhances the transmission and adds tactile alloy paddle shifters. Technically speaking, the eight-speed auto's calibration is good (nay, great) enough to leave to its own devices in most scenarios, and the engine has grunt at seemingly any speed, but every now and then you'll appreciate the extra control afforded by the shift paddles behind the steering

wheel. As ever, the gearbox can be switched into Sport mode independently of the other driving options selected.

Inside, the 2 Series is little different to a 1 Series, but that's no bad thing, as it's a high quality cabin with tactile switchgear and not a bad level of standard equipment. Our M Sport car looked fantastic with plenty of bespoke touches inside and out. The Estoril blue paint colour works particularly well with the M aerodynamic styling kit, which is also enhanced by other details such as high gloss Shadowline exterior trim and chrome for the dual exhausts and kidney grille. Inside, it's hard to miss the gorgeous M Sport three-spoke leather steering wheel and sports seats.

Most will fit black leather items no doubt, but we have a thing for the part-cloth, part-Alcantara upholstery that is standard. It matches the hexagonal detailing in the aluminium trim panels too.

The 2 Series Coupé is a real four-seat car with a big boot and adults will be acceptably comfortable in the rear seats for short amounts of time. The backrest splits and folds to increase boot space, but it's none-too-shabby even with the rear seats occupied – holding 390 litres. In summary, you can't really use the excuse of space and practicality to choose the 4 Series over the 2 Series. It might not be enough to convince the badge snobs, but the 2 Series is certainly the coming-of-age of the baby BMW coupé ●



E30

- EVO3 Shifter Kits from \$305
- Swaybar kits \$400
- Chassis Reinforcement from \$14.95
- Clutch & Flywheel Packages from \$974
- Clutch & Brake Lines from \$29
- Big Brake Kit from \$949



E36

- EVO3 Shifter Kits from \$355
- Swaybar Kits from \$139
- Clutch & Flywheel Packages from \$974
- Twin Disk Clutches from \$1799
- Clutch & Brake Lines from \$29
- Chassis Bushings
& Reinforcement Kits from \$35



E28

- EVO3 Shifter Kits from \$305
- Swaybar kits from \$174
- Clutch & Brake Lines from \$29
- M30 Clutch Kits from \$548



Vanilla Flavour

Does the cheapest diesel 3 Series feel cheap? Not a bit of it

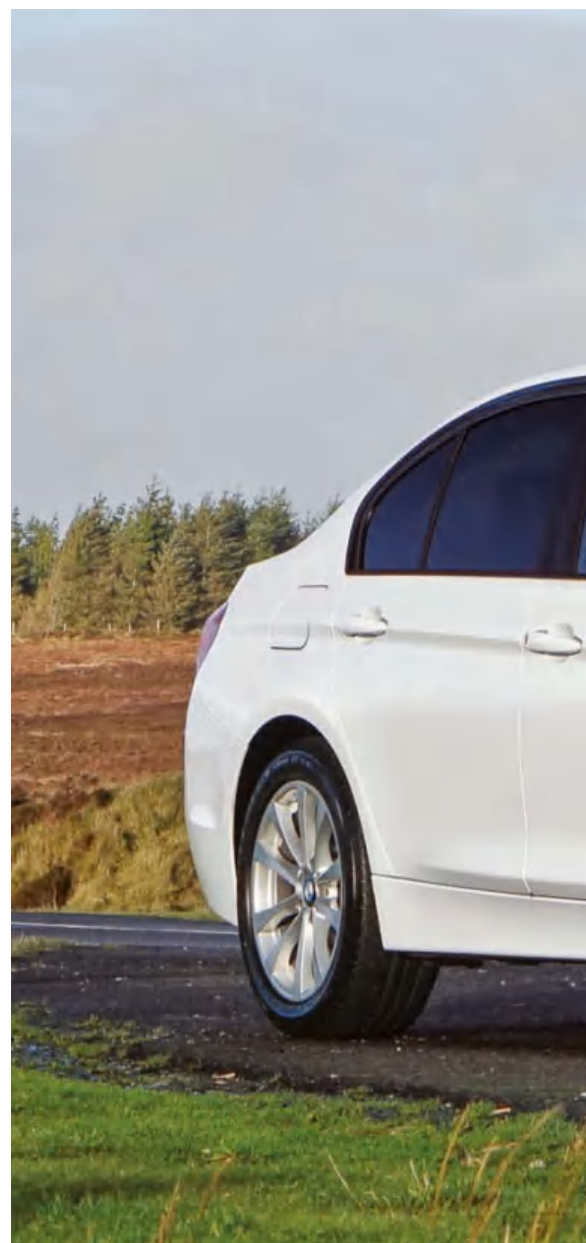
Words: Shane O' Donoghue Photography: Nick Maher

Although BMW chose to showcase its range-topping 340i Sport model at the international launch of the LCI (Life Cycle Impulse – 'face-lift' by any other name) 3 Series last summer, we reckon the subtle changes to the Three are more welcome the further down the range you traverse. Once upon a time, the entry-level diesel 3 Series was something you were lumbered with as a hire car and though the basic SE still comes with cloth upholstery as standard (nobody actually orders them with that of course), it has sat nav and plenty of other niceties, such as DAB digital radio, Bluetooth, USB connectivity, auto lights and wipers, rear parking sensors, cruise control and the all-important air conditioning.

Indeed, sitting in a press test example, which is – leather seats aside – fairly standard, I'm impressed with how far away from 'boggo' the 316d SE feels. I'd personally upgrade the steering wheel to a more tactile item from the options list (the centre boss looks way too bulky for my liking), but otherwise it's a sophisticated cabin that is well-made. Though the core design of the interior is unchanged (and indeed you'll do well to notice the extra chrome trim, more piano black and a redesigned centre console), it's worth emphasising just how well-damped every switch is in there, as not all car makers do it so well. It's still not quite spacious enough in the back, but on a par with its executive compact saloon rivals in the segment, and the boot is a useful 480-litre capacity.

One thing about the interior that does stand out in this test car is the inclusion of a manual gear lever. At this thin end of the price list there's a significant £1550 gap between manual and automatic transmissions so the latter is not always the default option. The manual gearbox was tweaked as part of the LCI update and it moves through the gate with a more satisfying 'snick' than it used to, banishing some of its springiness between changes. It also comes with 'engagement speed control', which adds a layer of sportiness. Change down under heavy deceleration and the throttle is blipped automatically to match the engine speed to the road speed, smoothening out the shift. The keenest of drivers prefer to do this themselves with a little heel and toe, but even they wouldn't buy a 316d to practise such things. Not only is it a bit of fun when you're pushing on, it also stabilises the rear of the car, especially when the grip levels are reduced. It seems to work particularly well when you toggle into Sport mode.

In fairness, the 316d is the last model in the 3 Series line-up in which you'd go exploring the limits for the sake of it, but it puts in a decent performance nonetheless. The chassis is wonderfully balanced as ever, so it maintains a good pace even when you're not really committed to driving quickly. There's a tad more understeer built into this car's setup to make it feel safer, but overall it's quite neutral. It takes more than a little provocation to unstick the rear tyres, even in the wet. That's due to the relatively low torque





Badge aside you'd be hard pushed to spot the 316d as the entry model in the range



The engine whispers along at a cruise and isn't all that gruff around town either...



output of this version of the 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel engine. The tyres are more than man enough to handle 199lb ft, and when they run out of answers, you usually only find out that the limits have been breached when you spot the DSC light flashing. It's a quick-acting system that is well-judged to assist when needed, without intruding when you don't.

Naturally, most buyers of the 316d will spend the majority of their time on the motorway and the good news is that this version excels in that environment. There are 17-inch alloy wheels as standard, but they are shod in tyres of fairly high profile, meaning plenty of cushioning – even before the suspension has to do any work. This results in the most comfortable 3 Series yet, though that is underpinned by great body control, so the car feels stable under braking and never floats over bumps. It's a great compromise.

Given how few differences there are between the 316d's and 320d's engines, we were surprised to note that the lesser model's seemed much quieter than the most recent 320d's we tried. The engine whispers along at a cruise and isn't all that gruff around town either – once it's warmed up anyway. It's economical too. Our time with the car probably wasn't very representative of the typical buyer, as we took the scenic route more often than not, but even being driven 'enthusiastically' we never saw less than 40mpg and on a long motorway schlep we'd expect most drivers to average over 50mpg. That's no better than the 320d manages really, but the savings are in the purchase price.

The efficiency star of the 3 Series line-up is the 320d EfficientDynamics Plus, but that starts at £30,670 – over three grand more than the similarly equipped 316d. Sure, with its (slightly) lower carbon

dioxide emissions, the 320d ED Plus has a lower Benefit-in-Kind taxation rate of 18 per cent (the 316d is 19 per cent), but that's irrelevant to private buyers and we don't think that alone is enough of a reason to go for the 320d. It really depends on your driving style and preferences and, crucially, where you'll do most of your driving. The 320d is noticeably quicker than the 316d, but not really any more economical. The 318d bridges the gap, as you'd expect. If we spent most of our driving days on the motorway network then we'd be very happy indeed with the keys to a new 316d ●

F30 316d SE Saloon

ENGINE: Four-cylinder, turbodiesel

CAPACITY: 1995cc

MAX POWER: 116hp @ 4000rpm

MAX TORQUE: 199lb ft @ 1250rpm

0-62MPH: 10.7 seconds

TOP SPEED: 125mph

ECONOMY: 68.9mpg

EMISSIONS: 109g/km

PRICE: £27,620





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ELECTRIC DREAMS?

BMW's electrifying expansion of its mainstream range continues and this is the most crucial model yet: the 330e. But do we feel a spark when driving it? Time to find out...

Words: Matt Robinson Photography: BMW



Charging point hidden behind flap on left front wing; it'll take a full charge in three hours from a standard domestic setup, two and a half hours from a BMW i Wallbox



I remember my first encounter with a BMW 330d. It was a post-face-lift E46 Saloon, a dark grey SE that I had to pick up from BMW UK's former headquarters in Bracknell and drive back to Gloucester on a typically grimy British winter evening. At the time, I was young and hot-headed, a staunch diesel naysayer. And I certainly wasn't alone in my opinion; despite the fledgling years of common-rail injection bringing significant and rapid improvements to old Rudolf's compression engine, to many the 330d was an inferior alternative to a 330i – BMW's classic, compact, straight-six petrol heartland.

You probably know what's coming next. I'd barely got to Swindon and the turning for the A419 (which cuts off the M4/M5 interchange by running along the fringes of the Cotswolds) before I realised that petrol's game was up. So phenomenal was the 204hp turbodiesel that it wholly converted me to a 'dervangelist' in the space of about 70 miles. The four-door Three demolished the distance with disdain as it scythed through the cold, dark night at well in excess of 40mpg. It really did appear to be all things to all men.

Of course, BMW has been doing diesel for a lot longer than that 330d of 2004, with a lineage stretching right back to the E28 524td of 1982. But it was that M57 D30 six-pot engine, seen first in the E39 530d in 1998 and then expanding into the 3 Series and other model lines, that started the sea-change within the marque that saw diesels become by far the preferred choice for the majority of BMW buyers; well, in this country and Europe, at least.

Presumably, BMW is hoping for a similar moment of enlightenment for its customers with this new 330e. Like the difficulty Munich encountered in getting the public to accept a 'd'-suffix at the end of the model number instead of an 'i', now 'e' is the latest fashion and it's the letter that supposedly makes the most eco-sense in the wake of Volkswagen's 'Dieselgate' shame. Ironical, really, that diesel's future looks under threat from petrol once more, albeit petrol with the assistance of electricity.

That's right, the 330e is a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, or PHEV. This is BMW's i-brand know-how continuing to encroach into the marque's core model offerings, the outlandish i3 and i8's presence in showrooms bolstered by the likes of the X5 xDrive40e, the forthcoming BMW 740e and the 225xe Active Tourer we'll be bringing you a review of next month. The 330e actually shares a lot of hardware with the X5 PHEV, as it has the same longitudinally-mounted 2.0-litre four-cylinder TwinPower Turbo petrol engine up front with the electric motor sandwiched into the glorious eight-speed automatic transmission, but it doesn't get 340e badging, as its drivetrain is less powerful than the X5's (252hp and 310lb ft, compared to 313hp and 332lb ft) and it's also rear-wheel drive, where the SUV has traction at all corners.

Lighter than the X5 by more than 600kg, though, the 330e is in another league in terms of its performance, be that against the clock or with regards to its energy usage. BMW quotes a rapid 6.1-second 0-62mph time and a 140mph top speed for the



F30 330e

DRIVETRAIN: 2.0-litre turbocharged inline-four petrol with synchronous electric motor, eight-speed Steptronic auto, rear-wheel drive

MAX POWER: Petrol 184hp at 5000-6500rpm; electric 88hp at 2500rpm; combined peak output 252hp

MAX TORQUE: Petrol 214lb ft at 1350-4250rpm; electric 184lb ft at 0-2500rpm; combined peak output 310lb ft, 0-62mph: 6.1 seconds

TOP SPEED: 140mph

EMISSIONS: 44g/km

PRICE: From £28,935, including government's £5000 grant (until 1 March)

330e, but it's the official economy and CO₂ emissions that cause jaws to hit the floor. The 3 Series PHEV doesn't just eclipse the X5 40e, it also embarrasses its 330i and 330d siblings; obliterating them with 148.7mpg and just 44g/km CO₂. Even upgrading to larger alloys only causes slight deteriorations, to 134.5mpg and 49g/km, so any way you cut it, these are truly exceptional, road tax-free returns.

Naturally, the cynics out there will be gearing up to take the 330e's case apart immediately, citing the fact no PHEV can ever get near its stratospheric on-paper boasts. And, if our test drive figures are anything to go by, they've got plenty of ammunition. On a flat, urban/extra-urban route in and around Munich, where the temperature was seven degrees centigrade, we covered 79 miles at an average of 34.4mph and got back 62.8mpg, with 7.0kWh/62.5 miles of battery use at the same time. That's 42 per cent of what the 330e is supposedly capable of.

However, let's reassess. BMW legally has to quote the NEDC figures and everyone associated with the

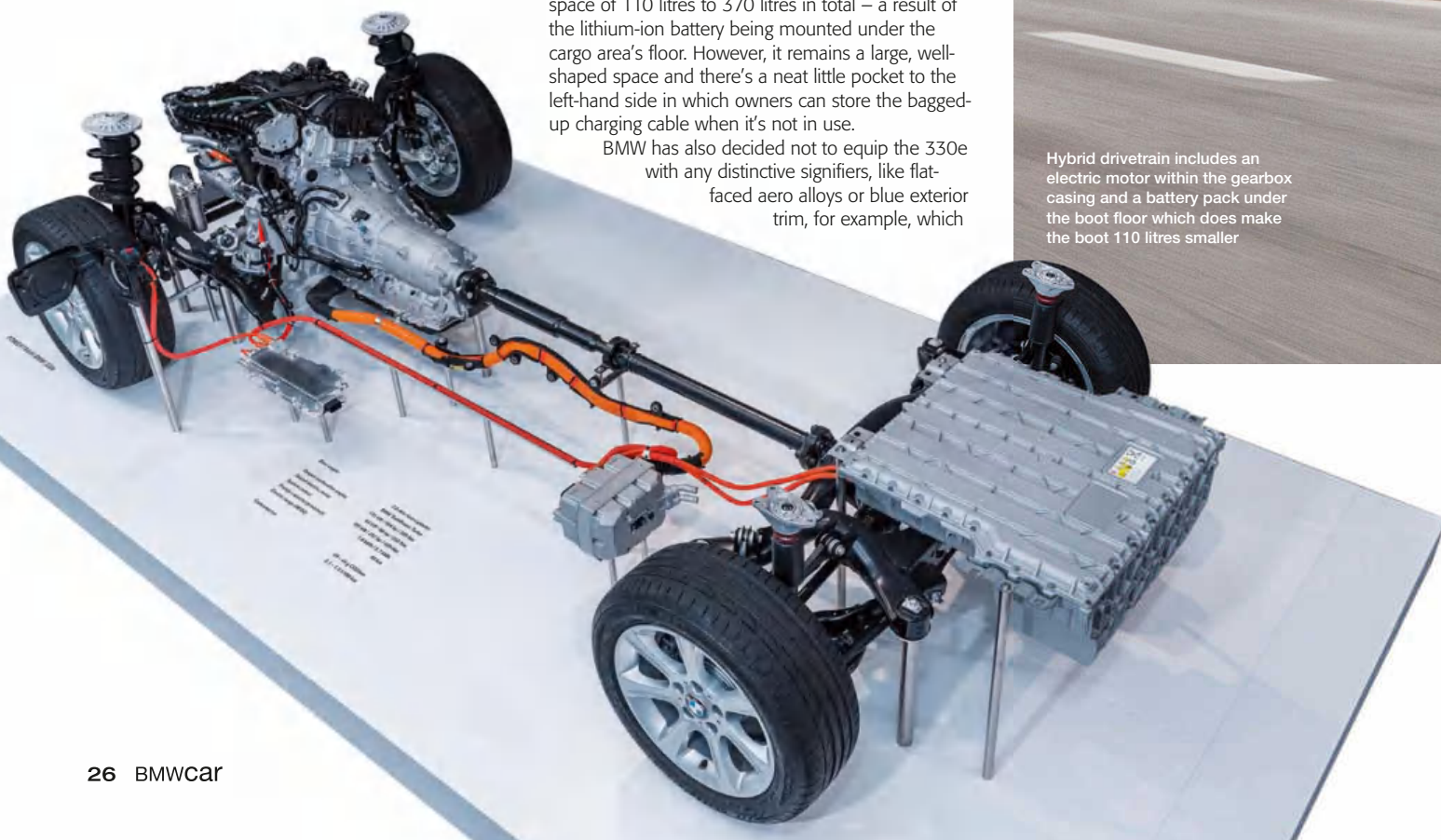
automotive industry now knows that these bear little resemblance to reality, with the data for PHEVs particularly skewed. Furthermore, BMW maintains many of its customers worldwide only commute 19 miles a day. So, with plenty of access to charging points at home and places of work, such owners could use the 330e's fully electric range of 25 miles day in, day out, and never touch the fossil fuel in the tank. Also, on the same route, despite it now being a four-cylinder motor, the 330i would probably have failed to surpass 30mpg and even a 330d wouldn't have got close to the 330e's returns. Thus, we're inclined to label the hybrid Three as an economical success story.

So, if we accept the electrification has, like the E46 330d did back in 2004, given all drivers the best of both worlds – economy and power – then we have to satisfy two further questions: how does the 330e drive, and has the integration of the electric motor and battery affected the car's practicality?

On the latter score, there's a reduction in boot space of 110 litres to 370 litres in total – a result of the lithium-ion battery being mounted under the cargo area's floor. However, it remains a large, well-shaped space and there's a neat little pocket to the left-hand side in which owners can store the bagged-up charging cable when it's not in use.

BMW has also decided not to equip the 330e with any distinctive signifiers, like flat-faced aero alloys or blue exterior trim, for example, which

Hybrid drivetrain includes an electric motor within the gearbox casing and a battery pack under the boot floor which does make the boot 110 litres smaller



Whether it's using only one of its motors or both in unison, the 330e feels extremely rapid





Interior is basically as per all other F30
 Three's bar the additional read-outs on the
 iDrive screen and the car's ability to do
 120km/h without bothering the petrol engine!



will easily mark it out. Only the boot badge, 'eDrive' logos on the C-pillars and the electric charging port on the nearside front wing differentiates it from a 330d. To all intents and purposes, from the outside the clever hybrid is just another 3 Series, which will be of appeal to potential customers.

Inside, a few extra hybrid-related screens are available in the instrument cluster and iDrive display, there's a read-out for the battery's charge level, while blue stitching and mesh-effect cloth trim are specific to the 330e. There's also the eDrive button, which – like the X5 and i8 – cycles between Auto eDrive, Max eDrive and Save. The first of these lets the car choose between electric, hybrid and petrol power as required, Max eDrive locks the Three into full electric mode (if the battery's up to it) and Save favours the 2.0-litre four and brake recuperation to hold or replenish the battery's charge.

No matter which of these modes it's in, the 330e drives in a supremely confident and composed

manner, although its 1665kg bulk does rob it of the final degree of dynamic sharpness. However, the ride is fabulous, noise suppression is superb at all times and when it's running in zero-emissions EV mode, it is so much quieter than either a 330i or 330d could ever hope to be. The steering is fantastic and the 330e's body control is also top drawer, although the brakes have a slightly two-stage feel to them thanks to their energy-harvesting duties, while the 2.0-litre engine – always smooth and free-rewing – isn't one of BMW's most charismatic units. The better news is that, whether it's using only one of its motors or both in unison, the 330e feels extremely rapid; it's simply that it prefers being driven just within itself, rather than being thrashed right up to the ragged edge. If that really bothers you, you'll need a 335d, 340i or an M3 instead.

Personally speaking, I've not been won over in such an alarmingly easy fashion by the 330e of 2016 as I was by the 330d 12 years ago, although this is

probably the most comprehensively rounded BMW PHEV yet, i8 included. It's a fine car that will absolutely meet the needs of a large proportion of 3 Series buyers, be they private or business users. There's one more ace up the 330e's sleeve and that's a starting price of £28,935, including the government's £5000 grant, as an SE; from 1 March, that grant reduces to £2500, increasing the 330e's entry point to £31,435. But as an auto 330i starts from £34,690 (Luxury spec) and the cheapest 330d costs £37,800, you can see just how competitively BMW has priced this PHEV.

Whatever we think of the slightly fuzzy dynamics, the fact of the matter is that the 330e is a stunning integration of electric drive into BMW's single most important model. Does the 3 Series PHEV bring the curtain down on diesel's short era of dominance, then? Not quite, but it's increasingly looking like the beginning of the end for 'd'. The future is clearly going to belong to 'e' ●

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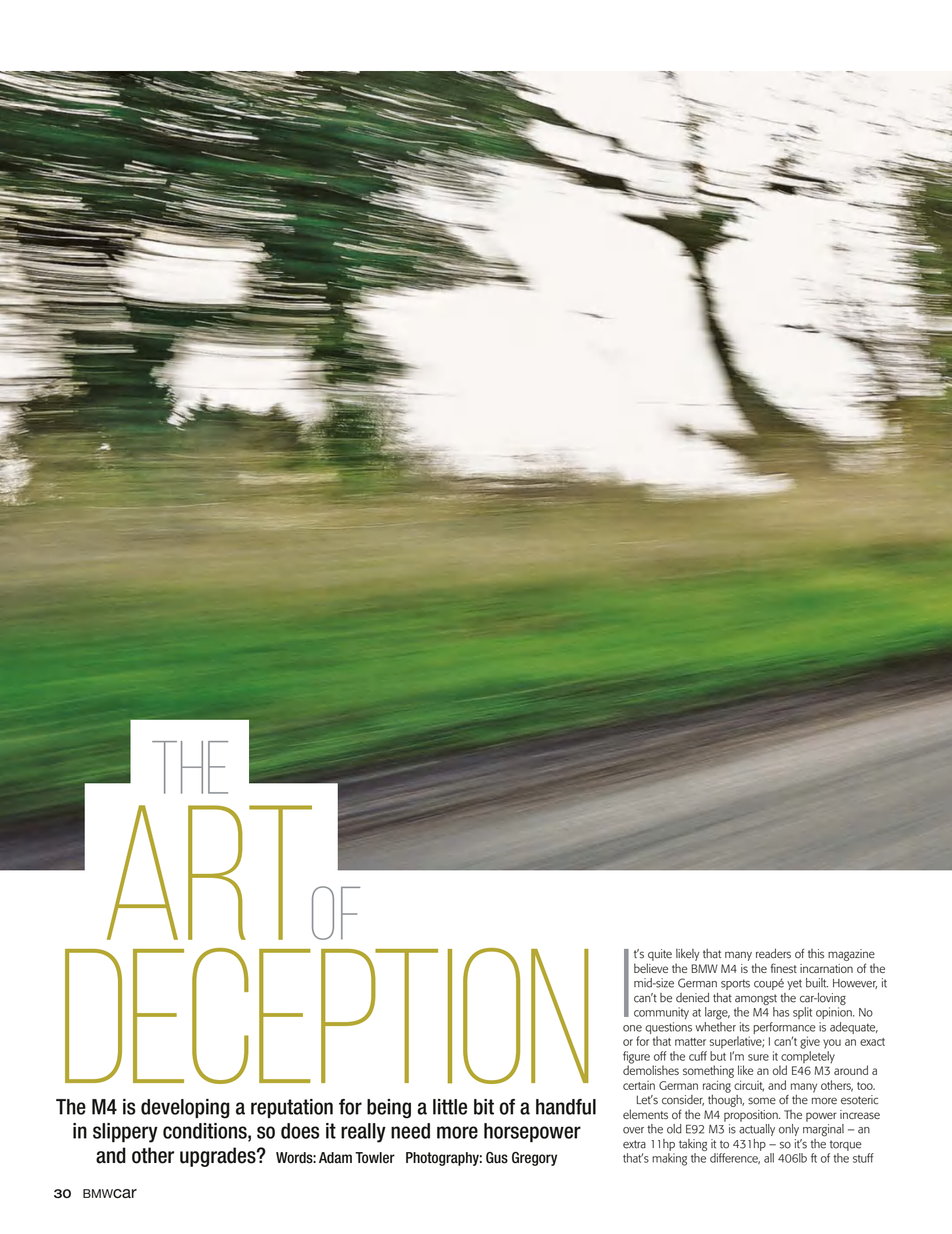
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THE ART OF DECEPTION

The M4 is developing a reputation for being a little bit of a handful in slippery conditions, so does it really need more horsepower and other upgrades? Words: Adam Towler Photography: Gus Gregory

It's quite likely that many readers of this magazine believe the BMW M4 is the finest incarnation of the mid-size German sports coupé yet built. However, it can't be denied that amongst the car-loving community at large, the M4 has split opinion. No one questions whether its performance is adequate, or for that matter superlative; I can't give you an exact figure off the cuff but I'm sure it completely demolishes something like an old E46 M3 around a certain German racing circuit, and many others, too.

Let's consider, though, some of the more esoteric elements of the M4 proposition. The power increase over the old E92 M3 is actually only marginal – an extra 11hp taking it to 431hp – so it's the torque that's making the difference, all 406lb ft of the stuff



versus the 295lb ft from the naturally aspirated V8. And that's not all. Forget for a moment the peak difference and consider where that number is now developed: it's from as little as 1850rpm and is then held all the way to 5500rpm in one arrow-straight line. In one of the older V8s the engine needed to be turning at 3900rpm before the full 295lb ft came on stream. Quite simply, whenever you plant your foot in an M4, as long as the engine is working at more than a whisper above idle speed, things happen... and they happen fast. Gear choice is vastly less critical, and while I won't get into the highbrow discussions of whether it has become all too easy and the loss of that gorgeous soundtrack, there's no denying that on modern, crowded roads, the S55 engine's on-demand

haymaker is exceedingly effective.

This sheer grunt does give the M4's chassis something to really think about. On a smooth, dry surface the car is hugely effective, with EDC damping allowing for a fairly comfortable ride or ruthless body control at the press of a button. But on a cold, greasy, wintry B-road with all the irregularities in surface that are to be expected, it's a car that can really bite the unwary. Left in the standard setting, the suspension can struggle to contain the torque if deployed clumsily, and sudden crests can make the car very lively indeed. I could probably add that the rather muted steering in the modern style doesn't assist the challenge, either. In such a situation, you either spend a good deal of your time watching the yellow traction

control light flicker incessantly, which is very frustrating, or DSC is switched off whereupon you're really juggling with the steak knives set.

That's where this Schnitzer ACS4 comes in. I know, it doesn't look like it'll be the answer to this particular problem. Despite keeping an open mind the additional 'aero', tuner-style 20-inch rims, lowered ride height, talk of coilovers, plus a comically noisy exhaust threatens to overwhelm me with preconceptions of a negative kind. A 'slammed' aftermarket treatment might be the last thing this car needs.

Then there's the news that really sets the alarm bells ringing: peak power on this M4 has been raised to a massive 510hp. Whatever you say about the new turbo power generation, that's a figure that any M3



driver just ten years ago would have thought impossible. Moreover, the maximum torque now stands at 479lb ft, which threatens to really give the rear axle something to get in a flap about.

I travel to Schnitzer's UK importer, Rossiters, near Kings Lynn, to collect the Austin yellow demo car, mine for a few days. Rossiters held the franchise before BMW made things official in the late 1990s, and then picked up the reins ten years later when BMW UK ended that arrangement. Today, you can order Schnitzer parts in 40 of the UK's BMW main dealers, as well as 20 other non-franchise BMW specialists. This demo car features plenty of the Schnitzer goodies on offer: there's the engine upgrade, which I'll come onto in a minute, with a new engine cover for added artistic embellishment; the carbon fibre front spoiler elements, 'canards' either side of the nose and carbon rear diffuser (no aerodynamic advantage is implied or given); the 'RS' suspension kit; 'export version' sports silencer; Type V forged 20-inch rims with Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres (255/30 R20 front and 275/30 R20 rear); a fancy pedal set; and some stickers for the exterior. All in that's £20,081.61 added to the price of your M4, including fitting. Let's see if it's worth it.

The most exciting snippet of information I gather from talking to Chris Rossiter and Lorcan Parnell at AC Schnitzer UK is that their colleagues back in Germany have developed this kit over many miles of road testing, and that their mantra is 'better fast not hard' (stop sniggering at the back please). In addition, the finer points of the setup have been tweaked after driving on the lanes close to Rossiters' Norfolk workshop. This attention to what matters in a road car and not a pursuit of lap times bodes very well already.

Such thoughts momentarily leave my mind when the ACS4 fires up with a boom and idles angrily. The cat-back exhaust keeps the factory valving system, but when they're open – especially on cold-start – it is mercurially loud.

The modifications to the engine consist solely of altering the messages from the ECU. Schnitzer achieves this not by remapping what's already there, but by fitting a 'piggyback' second ECU that adjusts the electronic information accordingly. It claims that the achieved outputs remain inside the limitations of the gearbox, and it supplies the car with a two-year/60,000km warranty that sits alongside the regular BMW warranty for the car. This can be extended to three years for an additional £1082.02. Quite rightly, Rossiters feel this peace of mind elevates the conversion above some of the straightforward remaps out there.

It may well have over 500hp but that's not what is grabbing my attention at the moment. Leaving the small town of Dersingham it's the ACS4's low speed ride that I'm most aware of. With such low profile rubber fitted it's no great surprise that the car picks out every last little bump on the road, which makes





It might look pretty standard in the interior from the driver's seat, but the driving experience is anything but standard!



**I've really enjoyed its transparency
in a modern car market obsessed
with modes and button pressing**

for a busy experience. This coilover option is the third and highest level of modification offered by Schnitzer for the M4, and forsakes the factory EDC dampers for a passive setup that is nonetheless adjustable manually for rebound, compression and ride height.

Fairly soon we're beyond the limits of the town and the speeds inevitably increase, whereupon it occurs to me that the jostling has petered out considerably. During my time with the car I become obsessed with this aspect of the ACS4: there are occasions when I think it's too busy, and on a particular surface that it doesn't like – one busy dual carriageway springs to mind – it seems to make a meal of a road that I'd never thought that bad. But overall I sense that while the suspension is working hard, it does filter out the worst of the movements entering the cabin. It sounds worse than it is: the intrusions banging through the M4's structure and causing the odd rattle here and there, but my head isn't nodding against my chest and my wobbly bits aren't being, er, wobbly. I learn to live with it, and soon accept it as 'normal'.

The faster you drive the ACS4, the better it gets. And going fast is one thing this car does very well indeed. The sheer rate of acceleration is now shocking. It's easy to get into the mindset where you work the engine between 2000-4000rpm and can't

imagine going much quicker. Then an odd occasion presents itself where the engine can really be wrung out to the redline and it's simply biblically fast. Or at least it is when it can find traction. In the middle of winter, that isn't all that often, it must be said.

This is where the Schnitzer bits really shine. I find it most refreshing that the damper setting on the dash can be ignored, primarily because it's one less thing to meddle with on the move. The real advantage is that as a driver, you learn the car, get to know how it will react in certain situations and under certain provocations. There's something really straightforward about this car which, if you switch the DSC systems off partially or completely, means it's nowhere near as scary as a 500hp coupé should be. Compressions and crests don't hold any fear for the Schnitzer driver, the ACS4 piercing through them without any of the unsettling behaviour of the standard car, and even the steering seems to have gained a little more feedback, tugging slightly this way and that depending on the road's surface.

The ACS4 likes to go sideways, usually at every opportunity. This is one of those cars that can be made to lose traction at the rear almost at will, but once you've got a handle on what happens next it is surprisingly controllable. Time and again the big yellow

4 Series has me giggling with euphoric nervousness at having kept things facing in the right direction, but the control once the tail has swung around is just lovely, and it's a great feeling to have it all hooked up on the exit of a corner just on the cusp of wheelspin. If anything, the ACS4 makes 500hp seem more manageable at times than the standard car's 431hp.

It's worth saying, though, however obvious, that it would be foolish to treat this M4 as if it were a grown-up Mazda MX5. If there's one thing you're always aware of, even when having a lot of fun, is that it is an inherently overpowered, rear-drive car that's traction-limited in bad weather. It's unwise to take too many liberties with any 500hp+ car, however progressive it seems most of the time. An aural indication of this is the snort released through the quad tailpipes when you lift suddenly off the throttle under full boost. It's an ugly kind of noise, akin to a lightning bolt cracking through the atmosphere, and it adds to the impression that this is one bad car to know.

By the end of my time with this M4 it has really got under my skin. I've really enjoyed its transparency in a modern car market obsessed with modes and button pressing. Left in the normal drivetrain setting it's a more refined proposition without the fake engine 'noise' (I think the straight-six sounds nice just as it is





AC Schnitzer ACS4 Sport

ENGINE: Twin-turbo, straight-six

CAPACITY: 2979cc

MAX POWER: 510hp

MAX TORQUE: 476lb ft

0-62MPH: 4.0 seconds

50-120MPH: 6.2 seconds

TOP SPEED: 155mph (limited)

MODIFICATIONS:

ENGINE: AC Schnitzer performance upgrade: £3641.04; engine optics package: £378.73; optional third year warranty: £1082.02

EXHAUST: Quad sports exhaust system (export version) with black tailpipes: £3275.75

WHEELS & TYRES: AC Schnitzer Type V lightweight forged alloy wheels with Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres. Front: 9x20-inches with 255/30 R20 tyres. Rear: 10x20-inches with 275/30 R20 tyres: £5949.66 (including wheel bolts and RDC tyre pressure valves)

SUSPENSION: AC Schnitzer RS adjustable suspension package: £3473.75; wheel alignment: £144

STYLING: AC Schnitzer carbon fibre 'canards': £960.50; carbon fibre front spoiler: £1050.26; carbon fibre rear diffuser: £1319.50

INTERIOR: AC Schnitzer aluminium pedal set: £195.60

All prices quoted include parts, labour and VAT.



to be honest), and the benefits that the suspension bring to the body control and predictability of the chassis in extremis are really appealing. I'd do without the body addenda, although that may well be at the top of your list – these things are, of course, down to personal preference. I'd forsake the wheels, mainly because I'd love to try this car on standard 19-inch wheels fitted with tyres that have a larger sidewall to see what the ride and road noise were like then. The engine upgrade is one of those mods that once experienced there is simply no going back, and given it's under a warranty I don't think I could say 'no'. I could drone on for paragraphs about how rapid this car now feels, but it's something that has to be

experienced to be believed in truth: it never, ever, feels dull. I'd leave the exhaust though, ostensibly to stay a bit more 'under the radar', and anyway, there are no performance claims made for it either. In other words, just taking the engine and suspension options adds around £7000 to an M4, and given the performance and dynamic benefits they bring, that seems like a very good deal to me. Sometimes, appearances can be deceptive ●

CONTACT:

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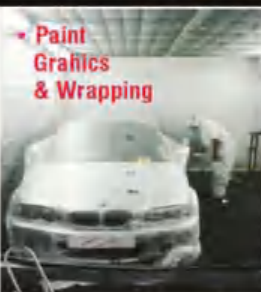
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AVAILABLE OPTION?

BMW UK has pitched the Hybrid X5 40e right into the section of the 4x4 market occupied by the X5 40d... but is the part-petrol, part-electric machine a real alternative?

Words: Bob Harper Photography: BMW

So here it is, the first of what will be four full plug-in hybrid models that BMW will be launching in the UK this year. The X5 is the first to get the PHEV treatment but following closely on its heels will be the 330e (that you can read about on page 24), the 220xe and the 740e and no doubt when the new Five and Six are eventually announced both of those cars' architecture will have been designed to allow full use of BMW's drivetrain of choice.

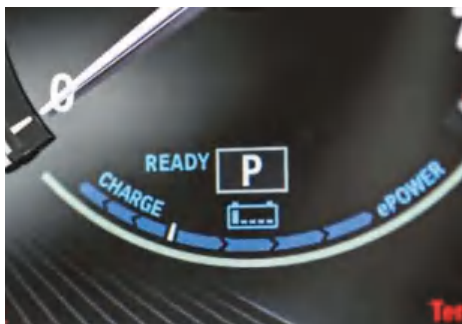
We've already had 'ActiveHybrid' versions of the 3, 5 and 7 Series but the next generation of BMW Hybrids are far more advanced than those and promise greater electric ranges and are less compromised in day-to-day use than its previous efforts. The real question that needs answering is whether one of these hybrids, and specifically this X5 we have here today, will actually suit your motoring needs? I would suggest that you'd need to sit down with a large piece of paper that will end up being covered in hastily squiggled figures to try and work out whether a hybrid or one of BMW's already excellent diesel versions makes most sense for your specific needs.

I have to hold my hands up and say that I approached the test of this new kid on the block with a fair amount of cynicism – a diesel X5 is a wonderful machine to drive and own and with the hybrid's limited range and perhaps less than stellar real-world economy figures I was finding it a difficult concept that someone would actually prefer to invest in the 40e than a 40d. First impressions are certainly good however – the X5 40e in M Sport trim we have here retains the big 4x4's handsome good looks and is still an imposing piece of kit. It's not likely your neighbours will notice it's a hybrid either unless they catch you charging it or clock the small 40e script on the front doors or the subtle eDrive logo sitting on the X5's rump.

Once I've clambered up into the X5, made myself comfortable and adjusted mirrors and seat to my satisfaction, I make the school boy error of assuming I've managed to break the X5 as pressing the starter button doesn't elicit any sort of engine starting noises from under the bonnet. The dash pod glows nicely and I soon realise that the X5 is 'running' and that all I need to do is release the electronic handbrake.

Moving off with nary a whisper from the drivetrain is always a slightly uncanny feeling, but it's one you soon become accustomed to in the X5. Once you're rolling it's not an entirely noise-free environment as a certain amount of road noise and tyre roar do eventually permeate the cabin as the speed rises. Trundling around the Berkshire sub-suburban roads where speeds are generally pretty low sees the four-cylinder twin-turbo slumbering, letting the electric motor and batteries take the strain until the speed rises to around 42mph and then the internal combustion side of the equation joins the party. We seem to use the word 'seamless' to describe so many things these days, but it *really* is the right description of the way the engine kicks in and out – if I hadn't caught the movement of the rev counter needle out of the corner of my eye I really wouldn't have realised the engine had kicked in.

After around 20 minutes of driving, not desperately fast, not intentionally slowly, simply keeping pace with the rest of the traffic on the road, the X5 is indicating a pretty staggering 73.9mpg. This rises and falls pretty rapidly depending on whether the four-cylinder is in play or not, and we must bear in mind that the battery was fully charged before departure, but it's the sort of figure a diesel X5 could only dream about. The flip side of the coin is that when you use all the performance the economy plummets dramatically, but it's worth remembering that there's a lot of performance on offer if you use the combined might of the twin-scroll turbo four and the electric



motor. Together they offer up 313hp (identical to the X5 40d's output) and 332lb ft of torque (considerably down on the 40d's 465lb ft) and if you ask it to, the 40e will really fly, taking you by surprise as this isn't the sort of forward momentum you're conditioned to expect in a car that has eco credentials. You'll need to use the upper end of the rev-range in the 40e to enjoy the best it has to offer, but that's no hardship as it does sound pretty good when revved hard. So, put simply, it's pretty enjoyable to punt along, whether looking to eke every last bit of charge from the battery in the quest for ever-better economy figures, or when giving it a good old fashioned pasting.

But how does the X5 40e seemingly manage to offer the best of both worlds? As mentioned it uses the four-cylinder turbocharged engine (in a 245hp state of tune) allied to a synchronous electric motor (offering 113hp and 184lb ft of torque) that's housed within the eight-speed automatic transmission. It has an all-electric range of between 14 and 19 miles and that latter figure is actually the distance market research has shown to be the average journey by X5 owners. BMW UK has put together some figures for what it expects potential owners will achieve under certain driving conditions and these may well help you decide on whether or not it's going to be suitable for your needs.

In an urban commuting environment with journeys of up to 15 miles, BMW reckons you should be able to achieve 94mpg, running almost exclusively on electric power. For an owner using their X5 for trips of between 30 and 40 miles a day including commuting BMW expects returns in the mid-40s, typically 43-47mpg (better than you'd get with a diesel-powered X5) but over longer journeys (over 125 miles) the 40e is expected to return between 26 and 27mpg, making it less economical than a diesel model. All these figures assume you're starting off with a fully charged battery pack, too, but as the X5 only takes two and a half hours to charge on a BMW i Wallbox (and three and a half from a standard 13amp socket) this shouldn't be too difficult to achieve.

However, it's worth considering that fuel economy isn't the be all and end all when considering one's overall motoring cost. For instance, the difference between running a car that does 30mpg compared to one that does 40mpg is only around £380 a year if you do 10k miles per year. If one assumes the 40e returns the former and the 40d the latter you'd need to factor in road tax (free for the 77g/km 40e) while the 157g/km 40d would cost you £180... bringing the overall cost difference to just £200. So it's as near as makes no difference.

What makes a huge difference is if you intend on running one of these as a company car as the chasm in





X5 xDrive40e M Sport

DRIVETRAIN: 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol with synchronous electric motor, eight-speed Steptronic automatic, four-wheel drive

MAX POWER: 245hp at 5000-6500rpm (petrol), 113hp at 3170rpm (electric motor)

PEAK COMBINED POWER OUTPUT: 313hp

MAX TORQUE: 258lb ft at 1250-4800rpm (petrol), 184lb ft @ 0rpm (electric motor)

PEAK COMBINED TORQUE OUTPUT: 332lb ft

0-62MPH: 6.8 seconds

TOP SPEED: 130mph (limited)

ECONOMY: 85.6mpg

CO2 EMISSIONS: 77g/km

PRICE (OTR): £56,705



eDrive lets you make the most of hybrid modes; boot is smaller than regular X5 and there's no seven-seat option



Interior of the 40e shares the same handsome architecture as other X5s



Benefit in Kind rates are significantly larger. An X5 40e will cost a 40 per cent tax payer a little over £3000 in tax whereas a 40d will be getting on for double that figure... and surely that's a pretty large chunk of cash unless your surname's Abramovich.

There are some compromises in running the Hybrid 4x4, particularly if you wanted to spec a third row of seats in your X5, as this simply isn't available in the 40e. Boot space is somewhat compromised too, and while it still has a virtually flat load bay its capacity is down to 500 litres (the 40d has 650) with the seats up, while maximum carrying capacity is down to 1720 for the 40e compared the 1870 for the non-hybrid models.

Overall though I was impressed with the 40e and were my monthly company car allowance somewhat larger and I was interested in a large 4x4 it would undoubtedly be on my short list. I would be able to get virtually all the way to the office in pure electric mode, charge it for a couple of hours and return home in the same manner. The car's energy management system would help here too. As well as the expected Drive Performance Control switch to toggle between Eco Pro, Comfort and Sport modes there's a separate eDrive switch that allows you to tailor the use of the batteries to best effect. The default mode is 'Auto eDrive' which allows for electric driving up to around 40mph and focuses on the best efficiency. 'Max eDrive' will see the X5 running purely on electric power up to speeds of 75mph and the four-cylinder will only be awoken from its slumber should you either exceed that speed or use kick down. The last mode is 'Save Battery' which allows you to effectively shut off the electric motor to save the battery for when you get to an urban area later in your journey, and this would be ideal for me to switch off the electric side of the equation when I'm on the (mostly) open roads of Kent, reverting to battery power for the last congested slog into London. And if you use the satellite navigation system the car basically works all this out for you.

It certainly won't be for everyone, but the 40e's combination of low running costs (depending on your driving needs), low company car tax and the fact that it's actually a hoot to drive quickly when the mood happens to take you makes BMW's first full hybrid a bit of a winner if you ask me. My only fear is that BMW won't be able to make them fast enough... ●



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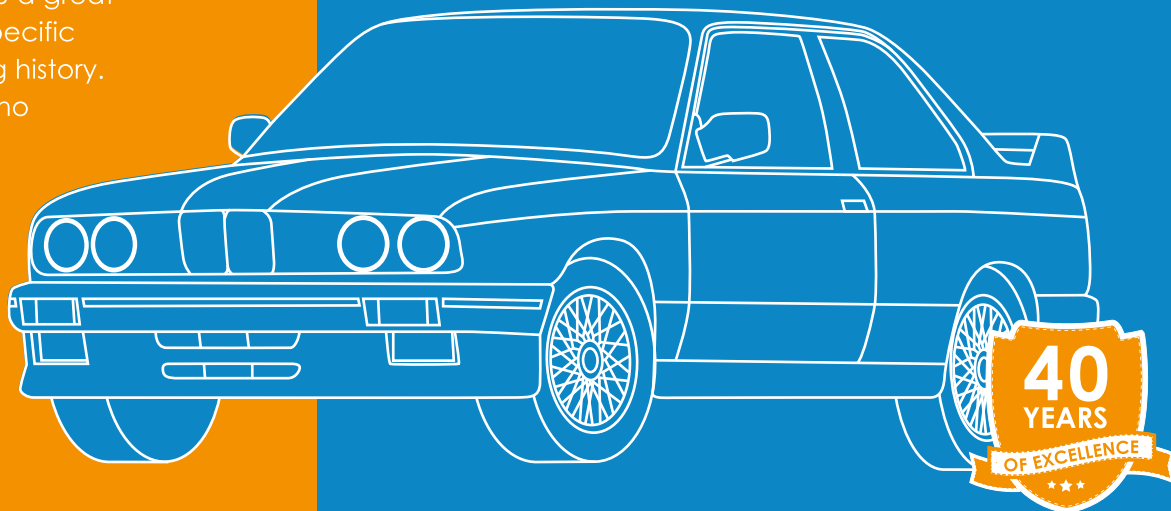
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F10 M5

The F10 M5 is one of the best cars you can buy for your money today and with prices starting at less than the cost of a new 518d we know which car we'd rather be driving...

Words: Bob Harper and Andrew Everett
Photography: BMW

Arguments will rage more or less until the end of time over which is the best M5 and aficionados of each incarnation will no doubt be able to wax lyrical over the particular merits of their chosen steed and why it should be the bearer of the title of the world's ultimate super saloon. We're not going to head down that road here though as we don't want to muddy the waters surrounding the latest M5 by comparing it to its illustrious forefathers; suffice to say that like each machine that has come before it the F10 M5 has, quite simply, wiped the opposition off the map. Even now in its twilight years the F10 M5 is seen as being the best super saloon you can buy today – quite an achievement for a car that first saw the light of day nigh-on five years ago now.

The best news for the used buyer, though, is that the F10 M5 is a stunning used buy. The new car owners' most hated enemy, depreciation, is the second-hand buyer's best friend and while the F10 M5 might not have suffered any worse than other expensive and powerful machines of this ilk the money involved is pretty serious. Today you can buy one of these cars for around the £30k mark or, to put it in the simplest terms, the price of a new base model 5 Series. Hmmm, let's consider that for a moment – new 518d or a used F10 M5? It's a no-brainer surely? Yes, the M5 will cost more to run, yes, it'll be significantly thirstier, yes, insurance will be higher... but its performance is utterly epic. It looks and feels so special and simply pressing the starter button makes you feel good and sends tingles up and down your spine. As the ultimate all-rounder this generation of M5 has to be the best. And the icing on the cake is that so far (touch wood!) it's proving to be amazingly reliable.

In the UK the F10 M5 went on sale in November 2011 and had a list price of a pretty eye-watering £73,040. Despite having an excellent standard specification many owners added to their cars which saw prices heading north of £80k for some examples, which makes today's entry-level price point all the more astonishing. It was an entirely different beast to the outgoing V10-engined M5 offering ten per cent more power, 30 per cent more torque, a 30 per cent improvement in fuel economy and, thanks to a larger 80-litre tank, the potential for 55 per cent better range on a tank of Super.

Headline figures for the twin-turbo V8 were pretty exceptional – 560hp, 502lb ft of torque and a 0-62mph time of 4.4 seconds – pretty staggering for a rear-wheel drive saloon tipping the scales at the best part of two tons. The V8 was, of course, equipped with twin turbos (a first for an M5) that nestled in the 90-degree Vee between the two cylinder banks, and along with high-precision direct fuel injection, Valvetronic variable valve control and a cross-bank exhaust manifold that optimised gas flow to the twin-scroll turbochargers, it was a masterpiece of M's engineering capabilities and a considerable step on from the standard N63 4.4 V8.

The previous generation M5 hadn't won itself a huge number of friends with its slightly clunky SMG gearbox so the F10 incarnation was fitted with the seven-speed M Double Clutch Transmission that had been so successful in the E9x M3 models. With both manual and fully-automated modes with three different programmes in each, the 'box could be individually tailored to the driver's requirements. There was also a low speed assistance function to keep the car moving smoothly through heavy traffic with only a light touch on the accelerator which was a



boon for those who felt the E60 M5 had been somewhat jerky at low speeds. As well as being able to switch the gearbox between various different modes the M5 also featured switchable electronic dampers, engine modes and levels of steering assistance, too.

Power was transmitted by a rear axle that has been thoroughly reworked from that of the standard F10 5 Series. Helping to put the power down was a new version of the M differential that had been seen in recent M cars. Dubbed Active M it was an electronically controlled multi-plate limited-slip differential that intervened rapidly and precisely at an early stage to control wheel spin. To make the system as efficient as possible M's engineers combined the differential lock system to incorporate the best of both worlds in that it is both a speed and torque sensitive system. A pair of electronic motors that are connected to the DSC control system via flex-ray high speed data transfer push the plates together within the differential with a locking force of anywhere between zero and 100 per cent. The system also takes into account the position of the accelerator, the rotational speed of the wheels and the car's yaw rate. As with other BMW M models, there was a halfway house traction setting – M Dynamic Mode – which raises the intervention point of the DSC system.

Suspension was an M-honed version of what was fitted to the F10 but, in an unusual move for an executive machine, M's engineers removed virtually all of the rubber bushing that you'd expect to find in a suspension setup. In order to provide the sort of sharp responses you'd expect from an M5, M's boffins discovered that as the 5 Series shell is so rigid they could go down the race car route and remove rubber bushings and connect the subframe directly to

the body, giving significantly better responses. Brakes were monster dinner-plate drilled discs gripped by six-piston callipers up front.

UK-spec was pretty generous, with standard items including Head-up Display, DAB digital radio, front and rear Park Distance Control, four-zone air conditioning, xenon headlights, Adaptive Headlights, front seat heating, Professional Multimedia Navigation system with BMW Assist, glass sunroof, Bluetooth and USB audio interface. There were still be plenty of items to tick on the options list if you were so inclined, such as a rear-view camera, High-Beam Assistant, Speed Limit information, Lane Change and Lane Departure warnings, Surround View, BMW Night Vision and Full Merino leather at an eye-watering £5445.

While not a huge amount changed on the M5 during its production run (and it's still in production should you be tempted to buy a new one) there were a number of special editions and minor detail changes to the car's spec. The first of these occurred in May 2012 with the launch of the limited edition M Performance Edition of which just 30 were built for the UK market at a slightly bonkers price of £95,140. For your money you got Frozen paint (BMW Individual Japan red with a Frozen red wrap, BMW Individual Frozen white or BMW Individual Frozen blue) complemented by Full Black Merino upholstery, floor mats with contrast piping, an Alcantara steering wheel, BMW Individual Piano black interior trim with a 'One of 30' laser cut designation, front headrests with M stitching and door sills with 'BMW M Performance Edition' script. 20-inch M double-spoke matt black alloy wheels, dark chrome exhaust, side gills and kidney surround, M Sport multi-function seats with lumbar support, powered bootlid operation, sun protection glass, split-folding rear seats, comfort

access, soft close doors, reversing assist camera, high-beam assistant, internet and BMW Professional 12-loudspeaker system completed the package.

May 2013 saw the announcement of the 5 Series' face-lift, but the vast majority of the changes didn't apply to the M5, although some additional ConnectedDrive services were added and the car also gained the larger touchpad iDrive controller, too. Face-lifted cars could be spotted by the adoption of the double-spoke kidney grille (as seen on the M6 models), a new M steering wheel with updated M DCT paddles as well as new tail-lights with 'thin blade' LED technology. This month also heralded the arrival of the Competition pack for the M5 – power was up to 575hp and this dropped the car's 0-62mph time to 4.2 seconds. The Competition Package also added Sport suspension settings, Sport steering, Sport exhaust with black chrome exhaust tailpipes and exclusive 20-inch double-spoke M light-alloy wheels. Additionally the Active M Differential was tuned to enhance agility during cornering while the M Dynamic Mode (MDM) was tuned to allow higher thresholds before the DSC intervened. The Competition Package was a £6700 option.

The last update was announced in May 2014 and was the arrival of the 30 Jahre M5 to celebrate 30 years of the M5, of which just 30 came to the UK priced at £91,890. It was based on the Competition Package but saw further rises in power and torque to 600hp and 516lb ft, dropping the car's 0-62mph time to 3.9 seconds. It also benefited from the Competition pack's suspension changes and was finished in Individual Frozen dark silver metallic with Individual black Alcantara and full Merino leather. It was a suitable celebration of 30 years of the Ultimate Super Saloon and still represents the pinnacle of the breed.





Wheels, tyres and brakes

The M5 has drilled, vented and directional brake discs as standard and an option of carbon ceramic discs. Bear in mind a pair of new carbon ceramic discs costs £7500 with VAT (yes, really) and decide if you really want that extra smidgin of brake performance! A conversion to standard discs would be seriously expensive because the callipers are also different. Pads vary in price from the standard ones at £388 through to Sport pads and the ones used with those fancy carbon discs – needless to say, you must never use standard pads on the ceramics. Pagid does a set of M5 front pads for £121 and a pair of new BMW steel discs are £945.60, Pagid sells them for £528 (for the pair). The six-piston alloy callipers are objects of lust and really, the standard steel disc brakes are just fine. So far, the DSC and control systems have not given any trouble but modern BMW's seem to have that licked anyway. Noisy brake pads have been an occasional problem solved by fitting and bedding in a new set but it seems that brake squeal is often part and parcel of owning these cars. Special anti-squeal paste behind the pads can often cure it.

Wheels are either 19 or 20-inch – Style 345M for the 19s, Style 343M for the 20s and Style 601M on the Comp pack models. A new 19-inch wheel will cost £529 but it looks like BMW's wheel cracking days seem to have gone away at last, and tyres aren't stupidly expensive. Budget £500 for a pair of quality 265/40x19s such as the Michelin Pilot Supersport or the Pilot Cup Sport 2. And the cost of tyres for 20-inch wheels? Around £20 a pair less!



Buying one

There are lots of M5s to choose from, and you can join the club for just £30k! Having said that we would advise upping your budget slightly as there can be quite a difference between a £30k machine and a £35k one, most notably in terms of mileage. Having said that, there are bound to be some gems hidden amongst the chaff, so don't immediately discount lower-priced examples.

From around £35k you can buy with confidence from a BMW main dealer, complete with the Approved Used warranty that *could* prove invaluable. So far the F10 M5 seems to be very reliable but that's not to say that when they do go wrong that they'll be cheap to fix! Ensuring you have the BMW warranty in place will ensure you shouldn't get any unpleasant surprises further down the line. If you do buy privately, or from a non-BMW specialist, we'd still recommend putting a BMW Warranty in place. To do this you *must* ensure that the service history is complete.

Once you've done that it's more or less a case of deciding what colours and options you prefer and starting your search.

The 20 Jahre edition models are the most expensive with cars currently on offer from £80,000-£100,000!





Bodywork

Of course there won't be any rust problems as it's still a new car. A few cars have the Frozen paint option and, to be honest, a decent vinyl wrap job is a much better idea. Keeping the Frozen finish good means just washing with a decent car shampoo and nothing else – no polish or even quick detailer. Whilst it appeals to some, we can't help but think there is a limited market for this and that used values will drop like a stone as it falls out of fashion.

There are no notable problems with the body – the door handles all seem fine but bear in mind that F10s have LED rear lights that will require replacement if and when a bulb dies. Extremely expensive xenon headlamps (£1374 each) are standard but thankfully they seem much more robust than the fragile E60 and E90 xenons. What is less than brilliant is the way the door sill kick plates fall to bits; these often need replacing after three to four years. However, at £81.50 each they aren't horrendously expensive, if you say it quickly!



Interior

Unlike the first two generations of M5 that were quite sparsely equipped, the F10 follows the E60 in being equipped with just about everything. Options include a heated steering wheel, soft close doors, blinds for the rear screen and rear doors, rear seat heating, two kinds of Alcantara headlining and a TV function for the navigation screen. None of these

really add a bean to the resale value of the car so the first owner's loss is your gain and even a car with zero options still has more than enough.

The interior ambience of many an F10 (and the M5 hasn't been hand-built since the E34) is often compromised by squeaks and rattles. The rear centre headlining can resonate, door seals creak

where they meet the roof, whilst the white symbols are well known for wearing off well-used buttons.

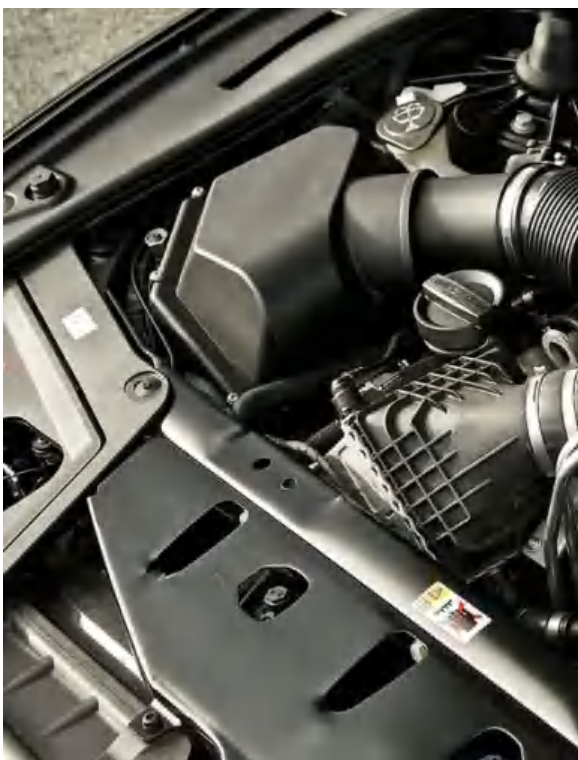
The F10 had a spate of air conditioning failures recently due to either pin holes in the alloy pipes or a holed condenser. BMW has been busy fixing these and offer a new condenser for around £100 for anyone fixing it out of warranty.



Steering and suspension

Thankfully the M5 has a proper hydraulic system with Servotronic. Apart from occasional rack or weepy pipe problems the system has been reliable. The F10 is a big heavy car and so you'd think it would be heavy on suspension parts but it's been good, although it does get through the occasional front suspension arm. A

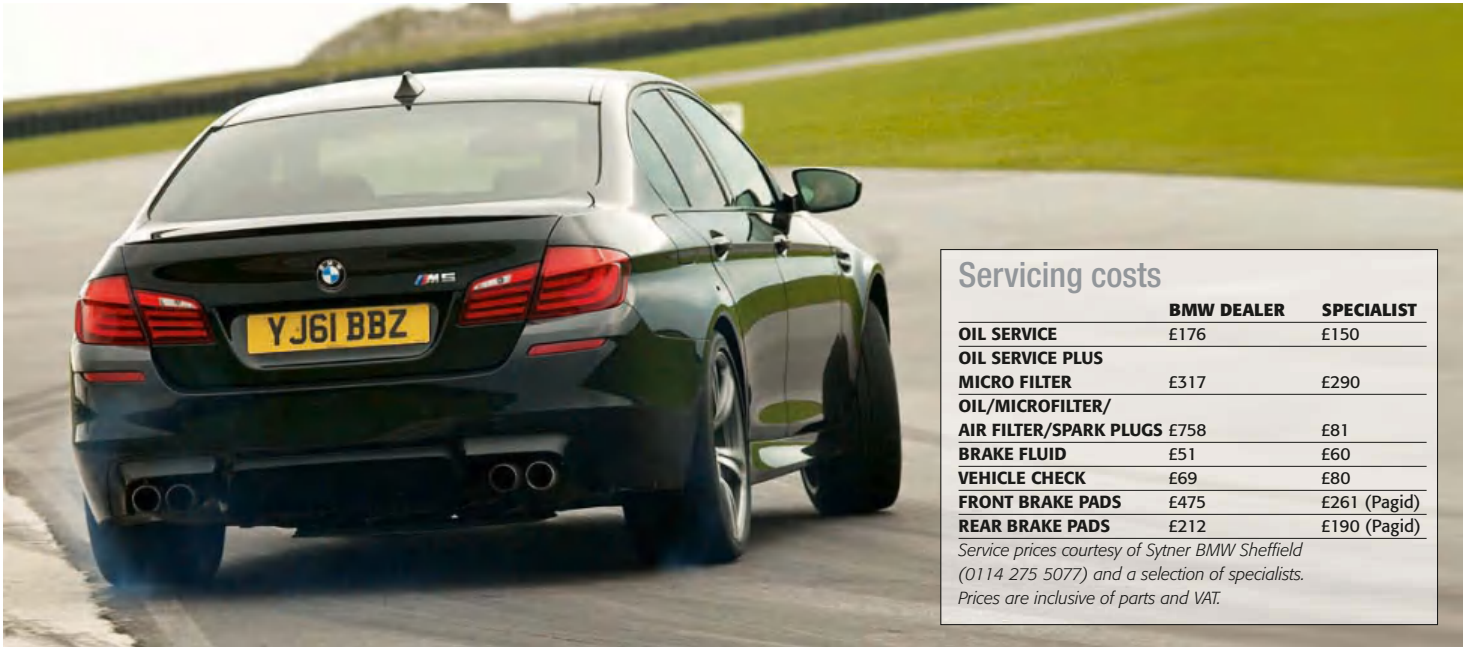
weird rattling knock from the back was apparently due to the rear coil springs and any car so affected should have been taken in hand by BMW and rectified. Should you need a new power steering rack, it's expensive at £2050 and used ones are very hard to track down.



Engine

The S63 twin-turbo V8 is a very powerful and complex engine that has already had a few problems. But unlike the previous V10, there isn't complication just for the sake of it. There is only one oil pump, for example. Most noteworthy is the potential oil pump failure on cars built between July and September 2012 and BMW recalled these cars to have a new pump fitted. Make sure this has been carried out and if you're buying from a BMW dealer then you can expect a fully sorted car.

Engine management problems have been a common bugbear if the internet is anything to go by but, of course, you never hear about the



Servicing costs

	BMW DEALER	SPECIALIST
OIL SERVICE	£176	£150
OIL SERVICE PLUS		
MICRO FILTER	£317	£290
OIL/MICROFILTER/		
AIR FILTER/SPARK PLUGS	£758	£81
BRAKE FLUID	£51	£60
VEHICLE CHECK	£69	£80
FRONT BRAKE PADS	£475	£261 (Pagid)
REAR BRAKE PADS	£212	£190 (Pagid)

Service prices courtesy of Sytner BMW Sheffield (0114 275 5077) and a selection of specialists. Prices are inclusive of parts and VAT.



majority of cars that have been perfectly fine. Warning messages and going into limp home mode are the most common issues – but it's what causes these problems that can be a time-consuming fix and we've read about cars spending 60 days or more at the dealers trying to rectify them. Fuel injectors, high pressure fuel pumps, fuel rails and pressure sensors are rare but possible causes of setting the warning messages off. The underbonnet heat undoubtedly causes a lot of it and a common problem is heat damaged and split turbo vacuum pipes. Coolant loss can be due to heat-affected coolant pipes that go to the turbos – a pair of steel pipes coming from the pump and branching out into four pipes into the

turbos. Due to the heat the coolant will evaporate quickly and coolant loss can be a mystery. Should you need a turbo, they are £1992 each but at least they're not bad to change.

The water pump on these is not an electric one but a proper belt-driven pump, one potential worry removed. Oil consumption can be high – some cars gallop through a litre every 1000 miles, some use none between services.

Apart from these troubles the actual engine appears okay, so far. It's a superb engine, of course, with plenty of torque and unlike the previous V10 offers sensible fuel economy. Just keep the warranty going...

Transmission and drivetrain

New to the M5 in F10 guise is a seven-speed dual clutch gearbox, a fine unit that doesn't yet appear to have caused any trouble. Just as well because according to a BMW dealer parts website, it's £11,500 plus VAT for a new one. Parts are available to fix it – mechatronics valve blocks and even the dual clutch unit – but the prices are still frightening and it's not a car you'd want to own when it's ten years old and out of warranty! There is a dual mass flywheel as well but so far they seem pretty reliable. That's a blessing as they're over £1500. The problem is that relatively few have been sold so it's impossible to paint a realistic picture of reliability but we have heard of cars with over 100,000 miles that are still okay. The propshaft, differential and driveshafts are all good and strong and we doubt you'll be breaking these anytime soon.



Electronics

The complexity of modern cars' electrical systems is what will probably finish off a lot of them off before their time. Because the M5s are still very much in the main dealer system there is very little aftermarket information on electronic problems but so far they have proven to be pretty good. The M5 is, of course, loaded with everything and these cars aren't old enough yet to need a new battery let alone anything else. Our main dealer contacts tell us the M5 is a good car, as is the F10 in general. It's not really old enough to have gone wrong and if something isn't functioning as it should a reflash with the latest relevant software should cure any ills.



Verdict

That the F10 M5 is a tremendous machine is beyond doubt. But the depreciation is absolutely savage, so unless you are buying on a PCP scheme (and many are) you may want to forget buying new. At the time of writing the new list price is just short of £74,000 but most dealers will try and match the £62,500 that brokers such as Broadspeed offer. There are various limited editions with the Frozen paint, if you like that sort of thing, but back here in the real world you can buy a nice very low mileage M5 for £35,000. We found a 2011 car in Space grey with 11,000 miles for £35,995 at main dealer (Specialist Cars of Tring –

0844 8094143). Loaded with 20-inch wheels, powered bootlid, reverse assist camera and Professional sound system (plus more) it's probably the ideal spec. Compared with the 100,000-miler we found advertised for £29,000 from a non franchised car dealer, it just doesn't make any sense to buy from anywhere other than a main dealer because without the warranty the thing will just be a millstone. As you can see from the service prices, BMW is not only very competitive but the service costs aren't that steep. But make sure the car you buy either has a BMW warranty or can accept one. We tapped a couple of

registration numbers into the BMW warranty website and it wouldn't give us a quote. With ever more speed cameras on the road, the silly cost of parts and its incredible complexity, cars like this are to be bought and enjoyed now. Unlike the E34 M5 for instance, the F10 M5 will probably not be a viable proposition in 20 years time when it's generating multiple error codes and invoices. However, that's a long way away so, for now, dig deep, put that 520d on hold and bet yourself a tenner that you can't own one of these for a year without the pleasure of a speed awareness course ●



F10 M5	
ENGINE: Twin-turbo 48-valve V8, Valvetronic, double Vanos, direct injection	TRACK (FRONT/REAR): 1627/1582mm
CAPACITY: 4395cc	SUSPENSION
BORE/STROKE: 88.3/89.0mm	FRONT: Double track control arm with M specific setup
COMPRESSION RATIO: 10.0:1	REAR: Integral-V multi-arm axle
MAX POWER: 560hp @ 5750-7000rpm	BRAKES
MAX TORQUE: 502lb ft @ 1500-5750rpm	FRONT: 400x36mm vented & drilled discs, six pot callipers
0-62MPH: 4.4 seconds	REAR: 396x24mm vented & drilled discs, six pot callipers
ECONOMY: 28.5mpg	TRANSMISSION: Seven-speed M DCT with Drivelogic
EMISSIONS (CO₂): 232g/km	STEERING: Hydraulic rack and pinion, M Servotronic
STANDING KM: 21.9 seconds	WHEELS: Light alloy style 345M
50-75MPH (4TH GEAR): 3.7 seconds	FRONT: 9x19-inch (9x20-inch Style 343M optional)
50-75MPH (5TH GEAR): 4.6 seconds	REAR: 10x19-inch (10x20-inch Style 343M optional)
TOP SPEED: 155mph (190mph with M driver's package)*	TYRES Michelin Pilot Super Sport
WEIGHT: 1870kg (DIN), 1945kg (EU)	FRONT: 265/40 ZR19 or 265/35 ZR20
LENGTH/WIDTH/HEIGHT: 4910/1891/1456mm	REAR: 295/35 ZR19 or 295/30 ZR20
PRICE: £73,040 (2011)	
<i>*M driver's package not offered in the United Kingdom</i>	



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IN
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60 **What's in a name?**
The 850CSi is an awesome GT and today is an appreciating classic.



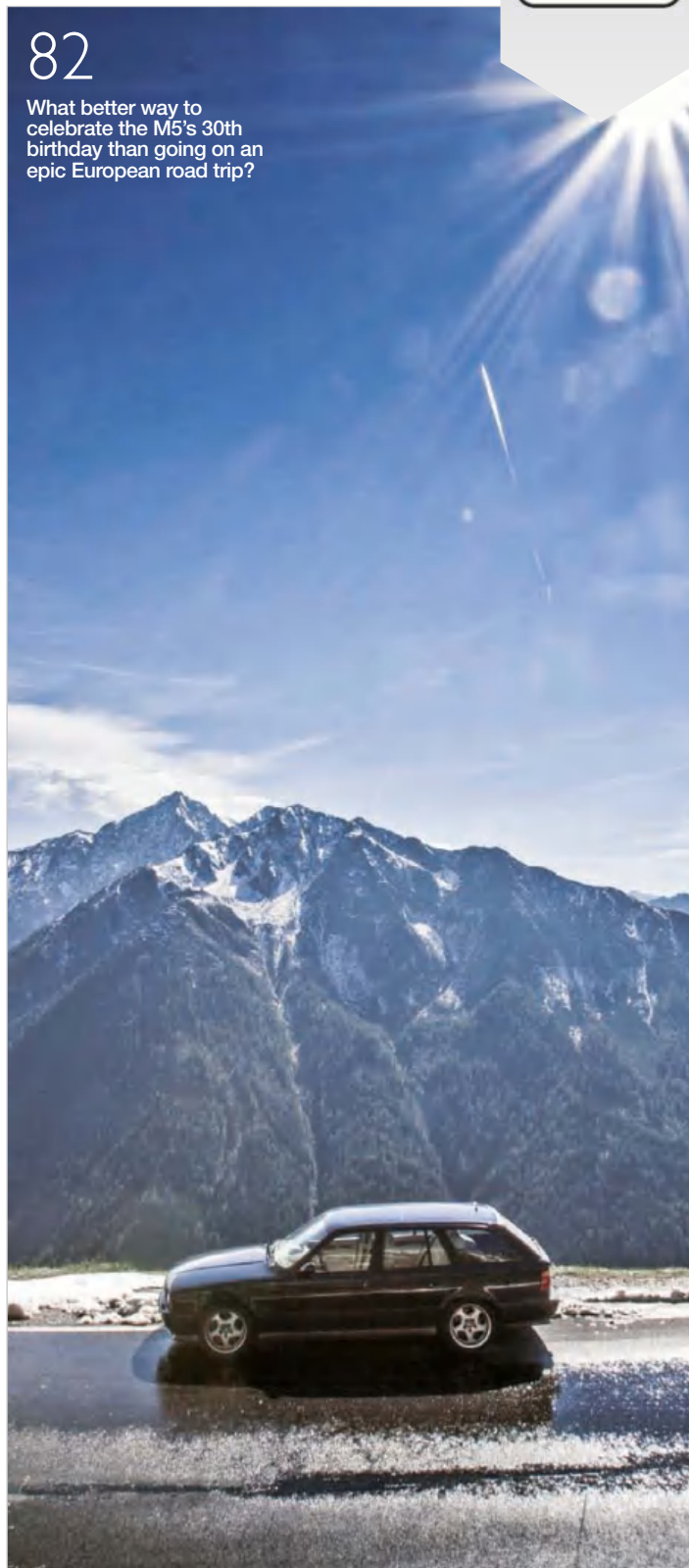
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The story behind one Australian's desire to own the hottest 7 Series.



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A 502 of any ilk is a rare beast, especially so when it's a cabriolet.

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What better way to celebrate the M5's 30th birthday than going on an epic European road trip?



From the Auction Floor

After the traditionally quiet time in the middle of winter the classic car auctioneers are dusting off the classics and getting ready for the show season to start

Anglia Car Auctions 23 January

A veritable BMW bonanza from Anglia Car Auctions at its first sale of 2016 with the vast majority of the cars finding new owners. Some high prices were paid but others offered pretty good value for money...

1989 E24 635CSi

A nice Dolphin grey with grey leather automatic transmission-equipped Six showing 115k miles backed up by MoTs and a service history. At £6930 it looked like conspicuously good value when compared to some of the prices being asked by private and specialist advisers these days.



1975 2002ti

A very nice late model '02 with 76k recorded miles and just two owners. The car had been part of the Graham Dacre collection. With a pre-sale estimate of £9000-£12,000 it sold for a very impressive £17,010.



1986 E24 628CSi

The smallest-engined Six might not be the most desirable but it shares the same stunning good looks as the more powerful models and can represent excellent value for money. This example had a large number of bills and invoices and old MoT certificates to back up its 136k indicated mileage and certainly looked the part. At just £3780 it was an excellent buy.



1990 E31 850i

The 8 Series has yet to become a seriously loved cult classic but it seems its well on the way, with low mileage examples being particularly coveted. This early V12 had done just 38,000 miles and this was backed by its history, and this was reflected in the £18,060 bid when the hammer fell.



1982 E21 Baur 320

The original Three is becoming a rare sight on our roads with good ones being squirreled away although the less good examples are yet to be economically viable investments. This 320 Baur looked to be good value at £2100 with a pre-sale estimate of £2000-£3000.



1978 E24 635CSi

It's rare to see one of the E12-based Sixes in such good condition and this car is believed to be the only five-speed manual gearbox right-hand drive 1978 model left in the UK. With just three owners with a recorded mileage of 54k miles, there were lots of old MoTs and service history to verify the mileage. It's believed to be the 29th example from the BMW production line and at £11,500 should be an excellent investment.



1995 E36 M3

When we were perusing Anglia Car Auctions's website prior to this sale we were very tempted to go and bid on this M3... the Saloons are far rarer than the Coupés and with a tempting £4000-£5000 pre-sale estimate it looked like stunning value for one of these appreciating classics. It had a recorded mileage of 83k, backed up by history, and even though it beat its estimate by some margin it still looked good value at £6510.



1991 Z1

One of the 85 official UK imports this Top red Z1 had just 36k miles showing and had been owned by the same person since 1999. Recently recommissioned with new tyres, a new BMW exhaust and a new hood it was ready to be enjoyed and coveted by a new owner. The hammer fell at £27,825 with the car having a pre-sale estimate of £24,000-£27,000.



1986 E30 318i

It may have sported the less popular four-door shell but this E30 318i looked like conspicuously good value for someone looking for a bit of classic fun. It'll never be the most desirable of the E30 breed but this M10-engined 318i was excellent value at £2388. It was a recent import from Japan but was UK registered and had just 13,000km showing on the car's odometer.



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RM Sotheby's, Arizona 28-29 January

If the Anglia sale was aimed fairly and squarely at the more affordable end of the market, RM Sotheby's sale in Arizona was a far pricier affair, with the four BMWs at the sale commanding almost three quarters of a million dollars. These were small beer, however, compared to some of the crème de la crème on offer, with at least ten cars selling for well over a million dollars. The headline car was a 1937 Mercedes 540K Special Roadster by Sindelfingen that sold for a staggering \$9.9 million!

1958 600

Of all the cars on offer at RM Sotheby's Arizona sale this 600 looked to offer excellent value for money. Based on a stretched Isetta the 600 offered four-seat accommodation and this example had been fully restored to its former glory and was said to be perfect in almost every respect. It was an original US import via the then importer, Max Hoffman, and at \$24,750 (approximately £17,000) it compares pretty favourably with what good Isettass sell for over here.



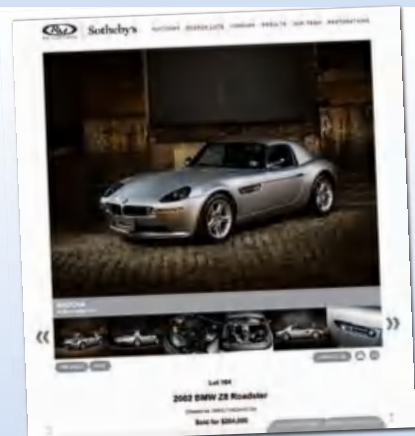
1973 3.0 CSL

This iconic CSL drew pretty strong money despite having plenty of non-original modifications, although the current owner was at pains to make it clear that all upgrades were easily reversible and that the original parts were still with the car. It was fitted with a 3.5-litre M30 from a 635CSi and a ZF five-speed gearbox and along with Holley fuel injection and high compression pistons the engine was reputed to be good for 300hp. Non-standard wheels were also fitted. It sold for \$126,500 (approximately £87,000).



2002 E52 Z8

Long gone are the days when the Z8 was in the doldrums – we remember being in a UK BMW dealer a number of years ago now who said, 'give me £40k and you can drive it away today!' He probably wouldn't have made the same offer for this example, though, as it was a virtually factory-fresh example with just 550 miles on the clock and still retained its original dealer stickers! It attracted a top bid, and sold for \$264,000 (approximately £182,000!).



1979 E26 M1

The M1 is another one of those cars that bottomed around the £40-£50k mark over a decade ago but is now seriously on the up, and this example at RM Sotheby's sold for a hefty \$300,000 (approximately £207,000). It's reputed to have been one of the original press cars and also sports an unusual leather interior which is believed to have been original. Despite having had an engine change and having been federalised to comply with American emissions regulations it sold for strong money.





InterClassics Maastricht

The first big classic show of the season got underway in Maastricht in January and featured what will no doubt be the first of many BMW centenary celebrations

Photography: Marc van Gestel

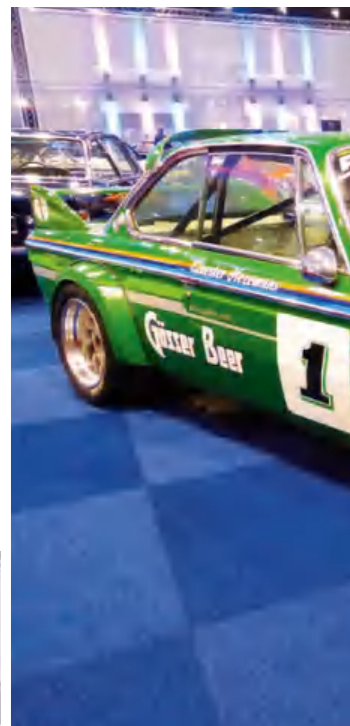
It might not be a show that you associate with the big names such as Essen or Retromobile but the 23rd running of InterClassics Maastricht was the most successful yet and every year it improves. Surely it won't be long before it's attracting even more crowds to the Netherlands?

This year its 35,000 square metre exhibition space was visited by nearly 30,000 classic enthusiasts and they would certainly have approved of space given over to BMW's 100th anniversary, as there were some cracking cars on display.

Best of show went to a stunning machine from the Gallery Brummen, a one-off masterpiece designed by Pietro Frua, a 1967 BMW Glas 3000 V8 Frua.

Director of InterClassics, Erik Panis was proud of the show: "We try to innovate every year and improve the quality of the exhibition. Both the exhibitors and visitors have expressed their appreciation for our efforts, and now the numbers also prove it was a huge success. This gives us energy and inspiration for the coming year."

If you fancy popping across the Channel for next year's event put 12-15 January 2017 in your diary.





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A fine array of classic BMW models from the fine chaps at Racing Models

1991 E30 M3

The Tauber Motorsport E30 M3 in the famous Tic Tac livery as driven in the 1991 DTM series by Allen Berg. A fine Minichamps

1:18 scale model with all opening panels revealing the interior, suspension and engine details.

Price: £110



1977 3.0 CSL

The Garage du Bac 3.0 CSL driven at Le Mans 1977 by Jean-Claude Depince, Jacques Coulon and Alain Cudini. Sadly the team retired in the 5th hour following engine failure. A very nice Spark 1:43 model supplied in the customary showcase.

Price: £46



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1974 2002

The Schnitzer 2002 as driven to third place in the 1974 DRM race at Hockenheim by Wolfgang May. A superb 1:43 Spark numbered, limited-edition model of 500 only.

Price: £48



1988 E30 M3

The M3 E30 from the 1988 1000 Lakes Rally Finland driven by rallying legend Ari Vatanen with co-driver Bruno Berglund.

Unfortunately it was a non-finisher with the team retiring following steering problems. A very nice Ixo 1:43 scale model supplied in the usual showcase.

Price: £30



All the models on this page can be ordered from Racing Models: www.racingmodels.com or 0844 8793437. BMW Car readers are eligible for a ten per cent discount by quoting 'BMW010' when ordering from Racing Models.

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WHAT'S IN A Name?

It had a BMW M chassis number, a BMW M engine and a chassis finely honed by the handling gurus at M GmbH yet the 850CSi has sometimes struggled to garner the right reputation

Admittedly it's a long time ago now, but I distinctly remember my first ride in an 850i. I was working for a busy BMW main dealer in central London and as it was expected we would see more than our fair share of the new über-coupé coming through our doors BMW GB (as it was at the time) loaned the dealership a pre-production example for us to have a play with. After days of badgering one of our Master Technicians finally gave in and took me out for quick blat in the new age coupé and I have several distinct recollections. First, the rear seats (where I was



unfortunate enough to be perched) were a joke. Second, it was too quiet; even at full chat it had a turbine-like smoothness that did little to stir the heart. And third, there seemed to be something missing when compared to the glorious 6 Series it replaced.

Over the years I grew to admire the super coupé, but I never lusted after one... that is until I drove a CSi. Amazing what two extra letters on the car's rump could do to the driving experience! To my mind the CSi was the car the 850i should have been: brutally fast yet endowed with keener handling and a soundtrack befitting of BMW's range-topping coupé.

But then it should have come as no surprise that the 850CSi was such a masterpiece as, while it wasn't badged as such, this was a fully fledged M car in all but name.

Of course, BMW M had already developed an even mightier beast, the M8 (see *BMW Car* February 2010 for the full story), but once the BMW board had pulled the plug on that monster, M turned its hand to developing a less extreme version of the E31 Coupé. Two of the main players in the development of the M8 had been Karl-Heinz Kalbfell and Wolfgang Reitzle and they managed to persuade the BMW board that

the 8 Series needed a flagship, a worthy range-topper, but a less extreme and not quite so expensive a prospect as the largely bespoke M8 would have been.

The first item that needed attention if the hottest Eight was going to be taken seriously was the engine. While there was nothing intrinsically wrong with the M70 V12 that acted as the powerplant for both the 750i and 850i, it wasn't exactly what you could call a *sporting* unit. From its 5.0-litre capacity it managed to produce 300hp or, to put that another way, just 60hp per litre – a figure that was beaten by the lowly four-cylinder engine from the 118i! It did offer



Words: Bob Harper Photography: Dave Smith



turbine-like smoothness and plenty of torque – 332lb ft of it – but an M car needed to sparkle and thus project leader for the S70 engine project, Franz Zinnecker, embarked on a programme of revisions to the big V12.

A capacity increase was the obvious way forward and thus the V12's bore was increased from 84 to 86mm (the same increase as had been envisaged for the M8's 6.0-litre unit) and the stroke was lengthened to 80mm, an increase of 5mm over the M70. This resulted in a swept volume of 5576cc but where the M8's engine had been designed with costly twin-cam, four-valve per-cylinder heads the production S70 stuck with its 24-valves and SOHC setup.

Naturally enough there was far more to it than a simple capacity increase as the V12 was endowed with lighter pistons, an increased compression ratio (up from 8.8:1 to 9.8:1), a stronger forged steel crankshaft, reprofiled camshafts and more aggressive valve timing in the quest for more top end power. The intake system was redesigned, the exhaust was reworked with larger diameter pipes with less back pressure and an engine oil cooler was also installed. Electronics were increasingly playing a much larger part in M's thinking at this time so there was also adjustable throttle sensitivity via a dash-mounted switch (K for Komfort or S for Sport) and the S70 also had a variable rev limit – 6400rpm in first and second

gears, 6200 in third, 6100 in fourth, and 6000rpm for fifth and sixth.

The result of all this work was an engine that developed 380hp at 5300rpm and 406lb ft at 4000rpm – gains of 80hp and 74lb ft over the standard M70 V12. It might still have only been developing 67hp per litre which must have seemed like pretty small beer compared to 95hp/litre from the contemporary E36 M3's S50 straight-six, but that mighty 406lb ft of torque went a long way to providing decent performance. Drive was through a six-speed manual 'box (no auto option here thank you very much) and this was mated to a limited-slip differential and, for the first time on an M-developed machine, traction control in the form of ASC+T, or Automatic Stability Control plus Traction if you prefer the long-winded version.

Naturally enough there were a series of chassis revisions to the Eight to create the CSI and these were under the guidance of M's then handling guru, Gerhard Richter. While it used the same basic McPherson strut/multi-link setup as the regular Eight, BMW M fitted upgraded front hubs, stiffer dampers and shorter, by 10mm, springs. The steering was the same recirculating ball setup as for the rest of the 8 Series range but came with Servotronic speed-sensitive assistance and a quicker rack – 2.8 turns lock-to-lock compared to the 850i's 3.3.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the CSI's make-up was the adoption of AHK (Aktive Hinterachs-Kinematik, or Active Rear-Axle Kinematics if you prefer the English) or rear-wheel steering in layman's terms. This hydraulically-activated system worked by turning the rear wheels in the same direction as the fronts in order to facilitate quicker and smoother direction changes at speeds of over approximately 40mph, and could alter the angle of the rear wheels by as much as 2.5 degrees.

Brakes were as per late model E34 M5-spec – 345x32mm vented, floating discs with four-pot front callipers. These were covered by more E34 M5 parts – its 17-inch 'Throwing Star' wheels, although 17-inch bolted cross-spokes were an option, and later in the car's life the 18-inch M Parallel items you can see in the pictures were also added to the options list.

Externally changes were kept to a minimum and, in the UK at least, a CSI can be easily mistaken for the 840i Sport models as they shared the same deeper front air dam, side sill additions and diffuser between the quad, round exhausts. Inside there were few changes of note, although the 180mph speedo with its red needles was a bit of a giveaway that this machine offered better performance than the normal 850i. BMW quoted a 0-62mph time of 6.0 seconds and a standing kilometre figure of 25.5 seconds – decent figures for its day, but there was no disguising

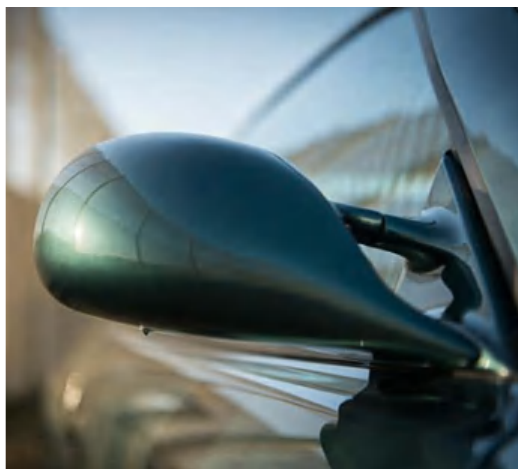


the fact that an 850CSi tipped the scales at a not inconsiderable 1865kg and there's no hiding that bulk when trying to get the car off the line. Nigh on 25 years later those performance figures are comfortably beaten by a 640i Coupé (5.3 and 24.8 seconds respectively), and obliterated by an M6 Coupé's 4.2- and 21.7-second times.

However, one should never judge a car by its raw statistics and a trip up to Cariconics (who happen to have a rather lovely 850CSi in stock) proves this admirably. BMW made just 160 right-hand drive CSis which makes it a very rare beast – there are fewer RHD 850CSis than E28 M5s for example – and Cariconics reckons this is the only Ascot green right-hooker in existence. It's a late model machine, from 1995, and in the low wintry sun it really does look the part. As the years go on the Eight's shape looks just better and better to my eyes, having an almost timeless elegance, aided by its lack of obvious aerodynamic addenda such as tacked on spoilers and its low nose line thanks to the pop-up headlights.

Cariconics specialises in the best of the best and this CSi has been treated to a thorough going over by a main dealer to ensure it's in fine fettle. Recent work includes eye-wateringly expensive rear exhaust sections, a new air conditioning condenser and auxiliary fan, rear top mounts and a full service. At first glance its £35k price tag might seem expensive but it





Externally there were few clues that this was the flagship £77k coupé bar the M mirrors and CSi script

has virtually everything going for it in terms of rarity, desirability and collectibility, and let's face it how many other V12-engined 1990s GTs with a manual gearbox can be bought for this sort of money? The proof of the pudding is in the eating, though, so once we've got the images safely embedded on a memory card it's time to take the CSi for a bit of a drive to see if my memories of how good the car is are correct.

Slipping into the cockpit is a little bit of an odd experience as so much of the Eight's interior is so unlike every other BMW you've ever come across. Not better or worse per se, just different. The centre console is a dominant force acting as a divider between driver and passenger and its sloping angled fascia containing the on-board computer, integrated stereo and heating and ventilation controls looks strangely unfamiliar despite its contents coming from the BMW parts bin. The dashpod is alien, too, with the overlapping rev counter and speedo, not something we've seen before or since in a BMW.

Twisting the key elicits the unusual brief starter motor whine that, again, sounds like no other BMW (well, it'll be familiar to owners of 1980s and 1990s BMW V12s but no others), although in this application there's a hint more depth to it, as if turning over the 5.6-litre V12 is a slightly more arduous task than calling the 'normal' V12 into life.



The controls operate in the expected BMW fashion though and there's a reassuring familiarity about the stalks and pedal interfaces and even the gearbox, which feels heavier than most BMWs at slow speeds, soon takes on an air of typical BMW efficiency. I spend the first few miles reacquainting myself with the car – it's years since I last drove an Eight – and it's worth getting used to the car's size and guessing where some of the car's extremities are before delving deeper into the performance envelope.

But when I do it's a thoroughly enjoyable experience with the V12 feeling unburstable and doling out huge servings of torque in the mid-range. Pretty soon I'm hooning along the back roads at a pretty decent lick and despite this type of environment not being the car's métier I can't help but marvel how well it copes with the tighter stuff, the brakes washing off excess speed without breaking into a sweat and the car's underpinnings helping to make it feel far more nimble than a nigh-on two-ton GT has any right to. The fast sweeping sections of road hint at where the CSi's real forte lies: crushing mile upon mile of fast, flowing A-roads – the exhaust signalling its approval with a cultured soundtrack and that clever AHK system helping the car to corner fast and with an unflappable feeling. As a way of crossing continents this car still has few peers.



E31 850CSi

ENGINE: V12, 24-valve
CAPACITY: 5576cc
STROKE/BORE: 80/86mm
COMPRESSION: 9.8:1
MAX POWER: 380hp @ 5300rpm
MAX TORQUE: 406lb ft @ 4000rpm
TOP SPEED: 155mph (limited)
0-62MPH: 6.0 seconds
NUMBER PRODUCED: 1510
YEAR PRODUCED: 1992 to 1996
PRICE WHEN NEW: £77,500





As we head back to Cariconic's HQ I can't help but feel that the CSi really should have been given an M moniker. Kalbfell who was head of M in the 1990s suggested it missed out because the V12 didn't adhere to M's high-revving engine concept but perhaps it's because leading lights such as Richter knew the true M8 had been built and shelved and thus they didn't want what perhaps they saw as an 'M-lite' machine to be given the honour of the M badge. Either way, the 850CSi remains one of M's greats and is so much more satisfying than the 850i that I sampled all the way back in 1989 ●

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Fairy tale

An epic journey over four continents! From riches to rags and back again! Sounds like some kind of Hollywood blockbuster, right? Nope, this is the tale of Josh Barlowe's 745i – a model with a unique story before it even left the factory!

Words and photography: Chris Nicholls







The E23 745i was the only version of the 7 Series that sported a genuine M engine, in this case the 24-valve M88 'six' as used in the contemporary E28 M5 and E24 M635CSi



"I said I'd take it off his hands
for \$13,000, to which he said yes!"

Built in South Africa from 1984 to 1987, the M-powered 745i was a response to Johannesburg's complaints that the German-built 745i that was available in Europe was not available in right-hand drive due to the turbo's location. Munich's solution? Swap in the M1's M88/3 'six and send complete knock down (CKD) kits to Rosslyn, South Africa for assembly. The result was a luxury saloon, complete with memory seats, trip computer, climate control and, amazingly, pop-up cassette tape holders in the driver's door, but with a supercar heart...

...And a supercar price. Costing more than a Ferrari 308 GTB, the sticker may have been one reason why only 192 were built in automatic, with a further 17 in manual. One of those manuals actually raced in the South African Modified Saloon Car Championship, becoming the only 7 Series ever officially used in motorsport, while one of those 192 autos – the car you can see here – ended up in Josh Barlowe's hands in Melbourne, Australia, albeit via a trip to Nottingham and Hong Kong.

Barlowe says that after starting life in South Africa, the car apparently made its way to the UK; a sticker suggested someone bought it from Siddons of Nottingham. Then, as 745i owners tended to be quite

wealthy, it was presumably shipped with the owners to Hong Kong. Sadly, at some point the love affair soured, as it was discovered decades later in a junkyard. Barlowe says the merchants who found both his and another 745i in the same yard purchased them for HK\$400 a pop (£35 in today's money!) and sent Barlowe's to Australia, where it found its way into the hands of its previous owner: a mechanical engineer from Cooma, New South Wales who coaxed it back to life.

It's here that Barlowe's role in the story begins. In late 1999, he was flicking through his E23 735i owner's manual when he saw references to the turbocharged 745i. Sadly, after consulting his friends at Brighton BMW, he learned its left-hand drive spec meant almost zero chance of getting one in Australia. However, one of the parts managers then mentioned the M-Power 745i and directed Barlowe to Peninsula BM, the owner of which was into 7 Series.

"The conversation I had with the owner there revealed he knew someone with an M745i in the LaTrobe Valley," says Barlowe. Having introduced himself to the elderly owners, Norm and Faye, and spoken of his interest in it, the pair kindly invited Barlowe to lunch and, later, Barlowe got to experience the car's prowess. "Norm took me for a spin on the

back roads and let it open," he continues. "We got in excess of 240km/h. I said, 'where do you get one of these things?!' Luckily, Norm happened to know of one in Cooma and said he and his wife could go and check it out, seeing as they were headed up that way anyway." They reported it wasn't in great condition but given its rarity and desirability, Barlowe decided to press on anyway. Initially, though, things didn't go well. The owner wasn't sure about Barlowe and wanted \$30,000. Then the promised photos didn't turn up. However, a few months later, Barlowe's luck changed. "I remember it quite clearly, he says. "On March 24, 2000, I had an accident in my existing E23 735i and the car got written off. Strangely enough, the following Monday, I got a call from the 745i's owner asking if I was still interested in his car!"

With serendipity having smiled upon him once, Barlowe received another pleasant surprise when he found out the owner was selling it cheap due to a divorce: "We talked figures around \$22,000 which I thought quite reasonable." However, Barlowe could only afford \$18,000 and after a couple of months of negotiations he eventually got his way, flying up to nearby Canberra after settling on \$18,000 and encouraged by the pictures (which finally arrived) that suggested everything was actually okay.





South African 745is generally had very high-spec interiors with every surface seemingly swathed in leather



Of course, reality is often different to photos, and upon arrival, Barlowe found the car had been seriously neglected: "There were little dents in the back, the materials looked quite tired and there was some paint peeling off it so I said I'd take it off his hands for \$13,000, to which he said yes!"

After his purchase, Barlowe drove the car back to Melbourne and straight into the Brighton BMW garages, whereupon the manager, Rob Chester, took one look, shook his head and said, "what have you done?". Barlowe had been talking to Chester in the lead-up to the purchase, and Chester kept advising him not to do it. However, Barlowe claims he "had to have it" and the timing did rather suggest "it was almost meant to be".

Sadly, though, even when fate is seemingly on your side, things can sometimes come back to bite you, and Chester ended up being proved right: "They had the car for a day to look over it and Chester called me back in the afternoon, sat me down at his desk and said, 'would you like a whisky? I think you're going to need one'." Barlowe was then handed a five-page report of things that needed fixing. The estimate? \$13,000 – the cost of the car.

Not having the money back then, Barlowe and Chester agreed that doing the minimum to get it

roadworthy and registered would be enough initially, with the rest best handled as a project. To keep himself on the road in the meantime, Barlowe purchased an E32 735i daily as well.

As with many projects, things progressed slowly after that. It took two years before Barlowe could rebuild the suspension, for example, including the self-levelling mechanism on the rear, and fix up all the running gear. Next came the body, which was given a bare metal respray in its original Bronzit Metallic. Here Barlowe discovered some rust in the doors but, thankfully, apart from the tin worm and a little accident damage around the right-hand B-pillar, the rest of the body was pretty straight. At the same time as the respray, Barlowe sent the chrome trims to be refinished as well.

At this stage, a few hiccups aside, things seemed to be progressing smoothly, but things soon changed. "I took it to a paintshop in Warragul on the recommendation of Norm and Faye," Barlowe explains. "It committed to the job but then the owner decided to sell the business to her ex-husband so she then didn't want to commit to the job. The paintshop, though, had already started stripping the car, so it ended up with me running around trying to find someone else to pick up the work."

Eventually, Barlowe found a shop called D-Line Smash Repairs in the same town who did "a beautiful job fixing it", but even then the gods weren't done playing with Barlowe. "As I was pulling out of Victoria Gardens shopping centre in Richmond, the boom gate came down on the car," he relates. This, and another minor incident meant more touch-up work, this time at Superfinish in Moorabbin. Thankfully, insurance payouts covered everything and thanks to Superfinish's skills, the paint on the roof and front end actually came out even better than the respray from D-Line. "It's all ended up working in my favour, to be honest," Barlowe laughs.

A year later, Barlowe moved onto the interior, calling upon Unique Leather Restorations to refresh the car's once-sumptuous Oyster Nappa leather interior. No small job, considering almost every surface inside the car, apart from the suede roof lining, is covered with dead cow. "We kept the original leather, bar one or two panels on the driver's seat, and that was all stripped back and recoloured and reconditioned," Barlowe says. Any mechanical and electrical work was handed to SouthernBM, a specialist shop whose M235i we also featured in the January 2016 issue. The car was actually back with them at time of writing getting an oil leak fixed, and

The 1980s centre console was a riot of buttons – those heating and air con controls look complicated!



was also awaiting its new bucket shims and final tune.

Barlowe says the eventual goal with the car is a close to factory-fresh restoration, although he's veered away from this slightly when it comes to the wheels and ECU. The late-model E24 M635CSi TRX alloys still look factory but a trained eye will spot they're not. Just for a little extra impact, Barlowe is also going to get them polished like the ones on his E32. As for the ECU, it's been upgraded with a Powerchip custom tune for a bit more grunt.

That the car isn't complete yet doesn't stop Barlowe driving it as often as he can. Indeed, he even took it over to New Zealand in 2012 (hence the NZ 'Warrant of Fitness' sticker) for the New Zealand Festival of Motor Racing, which celebrated 40 years of M. Admittedly he didn't race it, but he did put in some hard driving during the parade sessions and pushed the car closer to its (very high) limits than he could on the road. "It was a fantastic experience," he says.

Even on public roads, though, it clearly drives brilliantly. On a post-shoot ride, while its 2.2-ton wet weight meant it wasn't swift off the line, the M88 punched hard in roll-on acceleration, and though the

car exhibited typical 1980s-style body roll, grip levels were impressive. Yes, modern iterations of the unique Michelin TRXs help, but it clung on admirably. Even the brakes, thanks to the four piston front and two piston rear callipers, were solid, although you definitely felt the inertia during hard stops.

It's the gearbox, though, that's perhaps now the most amazing aspect of the car – at least in Sport mode. Left in auto, it's just a regular slushbox but bespoke maps for this model mean that in Sport it locks up the torque converter in third and locks out fourth entirely. This results in manual-like downshifts and seamless upshifts. This isn't hyperbole, either. There is literally no perceptible movement or loss of momentum when you upshift manually in Sport. It's a miracle, and makes you wonder what we've lost in the last 30 years, because few gearboxes we've experienced since come close.

It's easy to see why, then, Barlowe has no interest in selling it. "I love it too much. You go and drive it and it's so rewarding to drive," he enthuses. "It gives you that true BMW experience." A Hollywood-style happy ending, then. It really was meant to be ●

E23 745i

ENGINE: M88/3 3453cc six-cylinder (93.4mm bore, 84mm stroke), 24-valve crossflow head, 264-degree camshafts, 10.5:1 compression ratio, Bosch ML-Jetronic fuel injection, Bosch Motronic engine management with custom Powerchip tune

GEARBOX: ZF four-speed automatic transmission, 3.73:1 final drive ratio, limited-slip differential

MAX POWER: 290hp @ 6500rpm

MAX TORQUE: 251lb ft @ 4400rpm

CHASSIS: Pressed steel monocoque

FRONT SUSPENSION: McPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar

REAR SUSPENSION: Semi-trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar, self-levelling mechanism

BRAKES: 300mm ventilated discs with four-piston calipers (front), 285mm solid discs with two-piston calipers (rear), ABS

WHEELS: Fuchs TRX one-piece alloys from late model E24 M635CSi (415mm x 195mm ET20, 5x120 PCD)

TYRES: 240/45 VR415

**"It's all ended up working
in my favour, to be honest"**





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WHAT'S IN YOUR GARAGE?

Rare on British roads, as Mike Taylor reveals, this early post-war 502F V8 Cabriolet draws admiring glances wherever it goes

Photography: Mike Taylor

The Baroque period is said to have run from the early 17th century to the mid-18th century and refers to the exaggerated style conspicuous in art, music and sculpture to produce drama, tension and grandeur. The BMW 500 series of the early 1950s was nicknamed by owners and observers as 'Baroque Angels', the moniker being an acknowledgement of the car's flowing exaggerated lines shared by heavenly figures shaped during the baroque period.

For BMW, restarting production after hostilities was to prove an uphill struggle involving the possibility of building cars under licence to finance the purchase of machine tools; it was a consideration which wisely never saw the light of day. Another notion was to design a new baby car called the 331. In the event this too was vetoed by BMW board member, Hanns Grewenig, who believed the company's future lay in the manufacture of low volume luxury cars. With this in mind he tasked BMW's chief engineer, Alfred Böning to begin with a clean sheet, producing the basis for a luxury limousine. The outcome was the 500 Series. The job of styling the new car was given to Peter Schimanowski while BMW tasked Pininfarina to shape an alternative for comparison. Discussion at board level declared the Italian solution emulated too closely the Alfa Romeo 1900 of the day and it was discarded in favour of the in-house proposal.

The result was a car that eschewed angular edges for flowing lines; even the grille boasted a double curvature while the headlamps were recessed into the front wings and the front screen was a single panel giving the car a contemporary appearance. At the rear the bootlid flowed gracefully down to meet the bumper line. The most obvious feature was the lack of embellishment, the result being one of subtle elegance. Critically, the 501's flowing design was very reminiscent of the models emanating from Detroit during the 1930s.

Beneath was a perimeter frame chassis with double wishbone front suspension and torsion bar-type springing front and rear. Steering was a kind of rack and pinion with the rack following the curvature of the toothed pinion. Brakes were large drums all-round. Power was supplied by the M337 engine, which was a development of the M78 engine first used in the pre-war BMW 326. A straight-six OHV unit, the engine had been given a reinforced

crankshaft running in larger, more modern, main bearings. The cylinder head was reworked to produce better combustion efficiency fed by a new inlet manifold. Initially of 1971cc this engine produced an adequate 64hp.

Interestingly, the gearbox was mounted remotely between the second and third chassis crossmember rails operated by an ingenious, if complex, mechanism linked to a column mounted gear change, giving a somewhat vague shift pattern. Drive was taken from the clutch to the gearbox via an open shaft with rubber couplings fore and aft to soften drive take up.

Unfortunately, Schimanowski's calculations on body weight had been inaccurate; the welded chassis/body shell structure tipped the scales at a hefty 3150lb. The limited power available from the M337 engine produced a lack-lustre 84mph performance with a 0-60 gallop a dull 24 seconds.

"My first car was my sister's hand-me-down 1960 Mini, which I had almost free access to, taking my driving test in it in 1964," explains Benjamin Hargreaves, owner of the enchanting Cherry red 502F V8 we are reviewing. "I then took the Mini to Munich in Germany during my nine months before university where the intention was for me to learn the language. It was here that I really noticed German engineering. I was especially struck by the ubiquity of the saloon version of the 502. Production had only stopped just a few years before so they were quite common on Bavarian roads."

The BMW 501 was launched to a receptive audience at the Frankfurt Motor Show in April 1951 where its DM15,000 made it a markedly expensive machine; significantly more costly than its closest rival, the Mercedes Benz 220.

For BMW, putting the 501 saloon into production proved a tardy and involved procedure. With no sheet steel pressing equipment on hand at Munich to manufacture the bodies, the initial 2045 bodysheet chassis units were assembled by Karosserie Baur in Stuttgart and shipped to BMW's factory where the drivetrain and suspension components were added. Significantly, customers could also order a two-door coupé or convertible version from Baur or Autenrieth (or a four-door convertible from Baur) as alternatives.

Even before 501 production had properly begun, Böning proposed the development of a larger engine to power future versions of the car to BMW's board.







His suggestion found favour. Rather than simply expand the capacity of the straight-six engine his approach was to create an all new compact, lightweight V8 similar to the type of engine being made by General Motors for the Oldsmobile Rocket.

It would feature a single camshaft located centrally in the cylinder block acting on pushrods operating overhead valves in wedge-shaped combustion chambers. However, the BMW engine would differ markedly from the US engine, its cylinder block being manufactured from aluminium alloy fitted with cast-iron cylinder liners. Capacity would be 2580cc and, fitted with a single twin choke Solex carburettor, the engine produced 100hp. At this time in BMW's history the proposed V8 programme would be a costly exercise. Nevertheless, the green light was given, the project being completed by Fritz Fiedler, who replaced Alfred Böning as BMW's chief engineer in 1952.

The engine was introduced in 1954 at the Geneva Motor Show in the 502 saloon. Based on the 501, this car featured a much more luxuriously appointed interior and proved a major threat to Mercedes in quality, luxury and performance; at the time of its launch the 502 was hailed as Germany's fastest saloon in regular production.

When *The Motor* road-tested a right-hand drive 501 powered by the new smooth V8 engine it was impressed by its apparent ease at covering long distances without stress to the driver or passengers. The car was capable of just 100mph with a 0-60 acceleration timed at 15.2 seconds. *Autocar* commented on the almost austere interior with its painted metal fascia, cloth-covered seats and rubber floor matting. Significantly, as a right-hand drive model, the column gear change had been changed to

a floor shift as part of the conversion.

Sadly, like the 501, the 502's elegance and speed came at a price and at DM17,000 restricted sales to a mere 190 units in the first year of manufacture. In 1955 the 502 was given a mild restyle, which included a wraparound rear window.

"During the 1970s I ran three different two-door BMWs starting with a 1600 and followed by two 2002Tis," continues Benjamin. "In those days BMWs were still quite unusual on the roads of the UK. I gave up the brand when people began to recognise what they were! Then I began to drive a company car, a Chrysler Alpine five-door hatchback, which is definitely the worst car I've ever had. However, having a car on the business did provide the opportunity to calculate the savings that I was making and I realised I could afford an Aston Martin; in those days the price of a second-hand example matched the cost of a new Ford Cortina. In 1973 I had already bought an Aston Martin DB2 drophead. I then bought a DB5."

Like the 501, the 502 could also be ordered in two-door cabriolet and coupé form from Baur. Interestingly, records reveal that a few 501s and 502s were also converted into ambulances and hearses. At the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1955, capacity of the V8 was increased to 3168cc and fitted to four new cars; the 507 two-seat convertible, the 503 coupé, the BMW 502 and the 505 limousine prototype. Compression ratio was increased to 7.2:1 and power was now up to 120hp. To provide even greater performance, the 3.2 Super was launched in 1957 which boasted 140hp.

In 1958 the 501 and 502 model designation was dropped when the 501 V8 was renamed the BMW 2.6 and the 502 was given the title of 2.6 Luxus.



Clearly a rare car on British roads today, this 1955 BMW 502F V8 Cabriolet makes an impressive sight

Power steering became an option in 1959 with front disc brakes being added the following year

The model names '3.2' and '3.2 Super' were replaced by the '3200L' and '3200S' in 1961, the L model being fitted with a single carburettor and producing 140hp while the S version was fitted with twin Solex or Zenith carburettors, the unit producing a healthy 160hp.

In 1961 the company's new model range was launched at the Frankfurt Show: the contemporary styled four-door Neue Klasse saloon with a four-cylinder 1500cc engine and the 3200CS coupé, the last model to be fitted with the Böning-inspired V8. Two years later manufacture of the 500-based models ceased. However, without doubt these cars had taken the Munich-based business from a little known limited production company to worldwide acclaim.

"My decision to look for a pre-war car began when a friend of mine had a 1930s Aston Martin," continues Benjamin as we stand admiring his red cabriolet. "I'd completed several runs in it and I'd given him moral support when he began racing the Aston Martin in club events. It encouraged me to begin thinking clearly about the kind of pre-war car I wanted for myself. Above all, it had to be capable of being driven from one side of Europe to the other. I started by looking at the Derby Bentleys, Lagondas and pre-war 2.0-litre BMWs. In the event I bought a

Lagonda. On one occasion I was driving out to Munich on a Historic BMW Club Rally following behind two pre-war BMW 319s and wondering whether I was going to be happy with one of these funny little cars. Later, I was in the BMW museum and saw a Baroque Angel, again. Then, I noticed an article about a similar cabriolet in a magazine. I telephoned a club member and received quite favourable reports about it. This car was up for sale and was twice as suitable and a third of the price of a 319, so I bought it in autumn 2008."

If appearances can be deceptive then this is certainly the case with the 502F cabriolet, its large curvaceous body and tall stance seeming to suggest a wallowy ride tinged with a relaxed gait. In reality this is far from the case. Moreover, the casual observer can be forgiven for thinking that the car originated in Detroit, until closer inspection reveals the iconic BMW propeller insignias back and front.

The doors open wide to give easy access, even for those travelling in the rear, while the seats are set high enough to ensure good visibility all-round for driver and passengers. Fit and finish is well up to BMW's luxury trademark, though there is a tinge of durability attached to the plain leather-covered dashboard and workmanlike rubber matting on the floor. Designed as a true five-seater, legroom and seat sizes ensure a degree of luxury when touring, the front seats proving especially comfortable, only the



lack of shape to the backrests preclude any sideways support when cornering.

Ahead of the driver is the large steering wheel with its period ring-type horn push, a characteristic so prevalent of Fifties cars. In the dashboard there is a semi-circular speedo with rectangular ancillary instruments for petrol, temperature and so on. The handbrake projects from underneath on the left-hand side of the column. Originally the 502 would have had a column gear change but on this car a previous owner has replaced it with a floor change, with the original chrome support for the column lever still being in evidence.

Starting the 3.2-litre engine presents no dramas, the V8 rumbling into life with ease. On this car clutch travel is pronounced, demanding that the pedal be pushed to the floor to ensure graunch-free gear selection. The movement is long yet precise. Twist and release the handbrake and we're off.

Without making demands on the engine acceleration is satisfyingly brisk. Changing up to second involves the long movement of the pedal and gear change, though drive take up is delightfully smooth in harmony with a responsive throttle. Up to

third is more of the same, the gate of the 'H' being similarly pronounced.

Top gear provides relaxed reaction from the engine and with probably 115mph maximum speed available cruising in unison with other traffic gives no sign of strain on the powertrain. For a tall car the handling is surprisingly roll-free perhaps indicating that even in the '50s BMWs were drivers' cars. Under way, the tall screen and large side windows satisfactorily mask those inside from irritating wind roar giving a pleasant sensation. The brakes – disc up front, drums behind – are fitted with a reassuring servo to take the pain away from slowing down, despite the car's 28cwt of unladen weight.

Clearly a rare car indeed on British roads today, this 1955 BMW 502F V8 Cabriolet makes an impressive sight, especially with the hood down, drawing many admiring, if slightly bemused glances as it glides by.

"The first owner kept it for four years," continues Benjamin. "The next owner was a newly qualified engineer in his late 20s and he kept it for 50 years. Other cars including a Gullwing Mercedes came and went but the 502 was the one that stayed in his

garage. Today it has covered over 600,000 kilometres and is on its fourth engine. He upgraded it to the highest specification with a 3200 S V8 engine (which produces 160hp), added a disc brake conversion and had the gear change moved to the floor – modifications that the factory offered at the end of the car's production life. He used it as his daily driver until the mid 1970s."

So what has been Benjamin's furthest trip in his Continent-covering cabriolet? "My furthest excursion was when I used it on a Delage rally, which took us down to Provence in Southern France," he grins at the memory. "When I take it to Germany, the car receives a lot of attention and there are often people who remember them when the 500 Series was still in production. I even came across someone who worked on these cars in the factory."

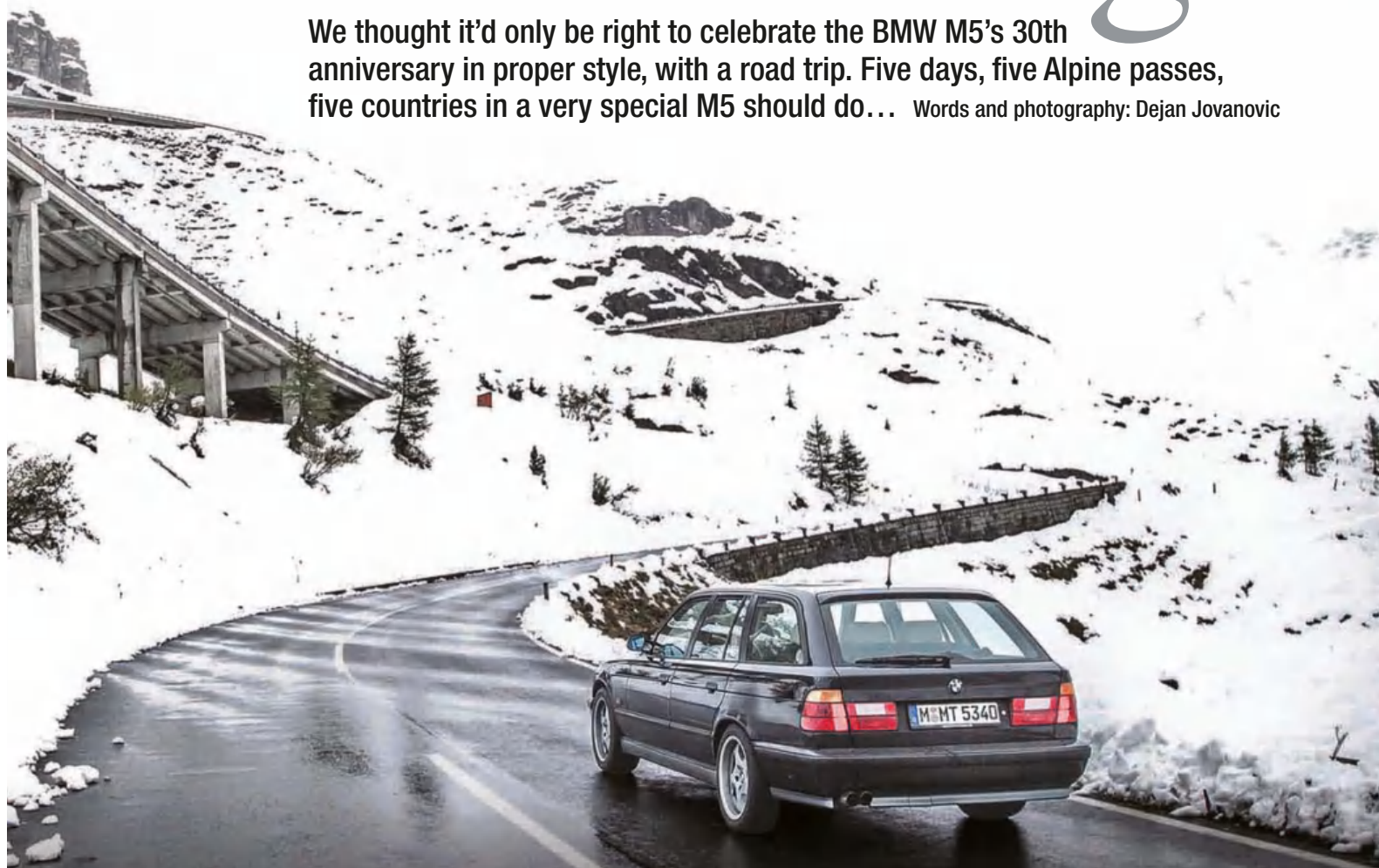
Clearly, Benjamin derives huge pleasure for his Baur BMW. "I do tend to drive it a great deal with the top down – I enjoy open air motoring," he asserts. "In fact, I might not have been so encouraged to buy it had it not been a soft-top. Once I was driving in East Sussex when a young girl looked at it and said, 'oh, that's cool'. It draws that kind of reaction" ●





Gone. Touring

We thought it'd only be right to celebrate the BMW M5's 30th anniversary in proper style, with a road trip. Five days, five Alpine passes, five countries in a very special M5 should do... Words and photography: Dejan Jovanovic



I find it somewhat surprising that this car can feel so ordinary for so much of the time – the steering is a bit slack in the centre, the gearshift throws are a bit long, there's never the same line through the H-gate, the clutch is heavy, the accelerator limp to begin with, the steering wheel itself comically huge and thin. And it's hard, with a rigid setup, not soft and over-padded like today's BMWs. It's amazing how old a car from 1993 can feel. Yet it's still my favourite M5 ever built. It lives up to the hero I imagined it to be when it was launched – back when Bill Clinton became US President and *Unforgiven* won an Oscar.

I'm lucky enough to be driving BMW's only museum example of an estate body style in the company's possession; it's an Individual model, with all the

bells, whistles, and a brick-like Siemens telephone. I have it for five days, with the aim of driving five Alpine passes across five countries to commemorate 30 years of the M5.

This is the last hand-built M5, from a time when M GmbH arguably peaked, capturing the imagination in a way that today's turbocharged M cars struggle to do. It's a straight-six, like it should be, and it's all naturally aspirated wholesome goodness. There's no traction control nor a PRND label in sight. And it's a Touring, so it was basically invented for some last-chance Alpine touring. The weather will shut the highest, best roads soon. From the end of October they're snowed under till the following May. Better get moving then...





Day One Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse, Austria

You will never drive on the derestricted autobahn leaving Munich without roadworks for company. The thing is, in Germany they actually fix the roads even if they aren't broken. Pushing on south towards Austria and my first target, Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse (High Alpine Road), on public roads in lazy dawn traffic I treat the 3.8-litre S38 motorsport-derived engine with respect and don't try too hard to chase down the redline. I treat 4000-5000rpm as the shift point and the S38 doesn't seem quite as 'motorsporty' as I expected from Motorsport GmbH, not exploding towards the redline from the get-go like I thought it might.

But everything changes when I push on. After a short refuge in the Austrian lakeside resort town of Zell Am See, at the foot of Grossglockner, the M5 wakes up and the throttle slurps in air greedily. Inside the leather-swathed cabin I savour the delicious intake roar from the front and the exhaust at the back – Munich's finest surround sound. There's a pinch point somewhere in the accelerator pedal's travel where the power is so responsive a period of initiation is necessary to learn to use it. The big tiller now makes sense as you need only a shuffle of a lazy wrist latched onto one spoke to result in lots of wheel angle. The fun is in fast, valley sweeps, where the slippery seats don't give you enough support and you're hanging onto the wheel as much as you're turning it.

At the Grossglockner's toll gates the friendly Austrian guard eyes the M5, cuts me a half-off discount and gives me a sticker. Today the pass is hosting a historic hillclimb with a field of Delahayes, Alfa 8Cs and big Bentleys. They'll have Grossglockner to themselves, though only in the afternoon. I have it to ▶

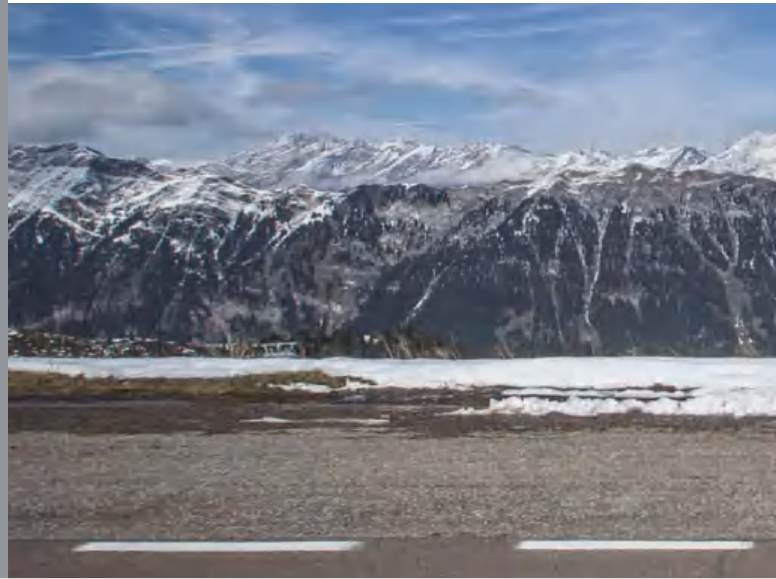


► myself now, since the M5 is the first and only car at the gate this early. I ask my admirer about the conditions on top as the pass was late to open. "Och ja, some snow. But M fünf... the car is gut. Ze question is, is the driver gut...?" He has the cheek to wink.

BMW's utterly perfect pedal placement is even more useful now for leaning on when your feet are sloshing about in the vast footwell up the flowing hairpins. The heavy, sticky floor-hinged throttle is comfortable under a heel and frees up once you dig it into the Individual carpeting. There's a fair bit going on then, but the car is poised. Now pressing on, the five gears click like old friends, though they're still long throws, and you row between third and fourth with a wrist, elbow, and shoulder.

Wherever you turn there's a perfect sightline and unobstructed vision, a grateful freedom that's too often a premium in modern cars with letterbox windows and bulky pillars. These pillars are slender yet the car beneath you feels substantial. It's not big, there's just a lot of it, but you sense that everything's there for a reason, that nothing goes to waste, and every part plays a vital role. They built these specially in Garching, away from the 5 Series assembly line. I can't imagine the M guys back then wasting time on waffle such as engine sound through the speakers.

Most of all it feels and smells like an old BMW, like granite wrapped in Nappa. Things seem to have been built better in 1993; nothing today has the weight of this M5's Bavarian indicator stalk. Here every button sinks into a smooth, weighted spring, as if it's an on/off switch for a nuclear power station and not merely the hazard lights. Winter takes its toll on Grossglockner pass every year, and the Touring, big and blasé, pounds potholes with soaked thuds. Kerb weight always wins.





There's a perfect sightline and unobstructed vision, a grateful freedom that's too often a premium in modern cars



Day Two Passo dello Stelvio, Italy/Switzerland

Grossglockner peak is Austria's highest mountain and the Hochalpenstrasse climbs to 2571 metres, where thin air starves the S38. It's a drastic difference, sapping what feels like a 100hp from the 340hp 3.8. Much of the 48km are above 2000 metres, passing high above the Pasterze Glacier. Today, however, I have to get to Italy and tick Passo dello Stelvio off the bucket list. Even before the Great Alpine Tour in an M5 Touring began, I had Stelvio in my mind, although before that I have to have a quick try of the Jaufenpass first...

The M5 picks up pace at the bottom yet I'm barely taking it past 6000rpm; there's still 1000rpm to go. Mechanical sympathy for a press car is a strange feeling for a motoring journalist! Windows down, heaters on, and the straight-six is all about top-end power rushing for revs. Jaufenpass throws hairpins at you at a rate I can only compare to the Tail of the Dragon, Tennessee, USA, but in a short while you're up top, and Italy's down there on the other side. At the peak's panorama kiosk I meet a couple of fellow travellers from Munich testing a BMW 7 Series prototype "with a V8," which is all they'd divulge. They know how to pick the roads. One of the guys asks if the M5 is for sale.

The plummet down into Italy is even steeper but Jaufenpass, Italy's northernmost Alpine pass, generously doesn't allow caravaners and the M5 is free to exchange horsepower for the effect of gravity. Through faster bends the long wheelbase remains taut and confident and it changes direction in the damp just as well, too. All the relentless switchbacks eventually have me stressing about the brakes, so I pause halfway down, at Gasthof Schlossberg, hanging off the edge off a hairpin. There's smoke in the air but no barbecue. The only smell lingering in the air is cooked brakes and burnt clutches – the smell of defeat for some of the other machines assembled here. The caravan-ban has all manner of 911 GT3s and an R8 or Ferrari here and there showing off for the guests on the deck.

You know when you've crossed into Italy as the road surface deteriorates considerably. There are loads of tourists now and they've let the caravans back in. In Italy you





► have two windows of driving opportunity: dawn and siesta time. By the time I get to the foot of Stelvio it's happy hour for me and I pass barely any cars making my way up. Stelvio starts off forested but it's not long before you're towering over the tree line. It's much narrower than anything else so far and in places two cars can't pass at once. Instead of Armco you get ominous blocks of stone lining the side of the road, and nigh-on three-point-turn hairpins. It's an exciting drive but sadly it comes to an abrupt halt. The only avalanche of the season had to go and close the top of Stelvio on the day the 'Great Alpine Tour' in an M5 Touring chooses to visit! That road will just have to go back on the bucket list.





Day Three Passo Fedaia, Italy

Since I lucked out on Stelvio I also have to drop Switzerland from the planned route and head straight towards the Dolomites. It ends up being 11 hours on the road today, blasting around every eastward squiggle I can find on the map, through the low-lying valleys. What a difference 340 true horsepower makes. The M5 really is an M today, with little patience for RVs and dawdlers, with bursts of ready acceleration for overtakes. In Italy, a land where everybody speeds, this car seems perfectly suited for 340hp and at 6000rpm it's so happy that even on open roads you feel inclined to select third gear and leave it there, playing with the top end enjoying the instant response to your right foot.

North/south Alpine roads are few and far between but any route going across the foothills gives you numerous options. Instead of doing the 1883-metre Passo di Tonale, I end up marathoning five or six passes – each thankfully open and avalanche-free. The poor surface only makes things more action packed, with the M5 dropping into crumbling hard shoulders and straightening out as much as possible every turn for that high-speed assuredness. These are the best roads so far and early in the morning, while the other tourists are making the most of vacation time and sleeping in late, it's phenomenal to wind my way along to the 1363-metre Passo di Mendola which climbs gently and really suits the S38, up or down. Next I arrive at Passo di Costalunga, Passo Pordoi, and the jewel of the Dolomites, Passo Fedaia, which is located at the base of the stunning Marmolada ▶



► rock. It's been a film location for *The Italian Job* and is a legendary race stage in the Giro d'Italia.

The road surface is eroded yet the M5 doesn't care, chasing down an MR2, a 944 and a Swiss club of Audi Quattros. By the time the blinds and shades come down and everyone's snoring for the afternoon, Passo della Mauria manages to outdo even Fedaia. Thick woods hide the sky, along with everything else bar the dewy black Tarmac that's snaking ahead to a town called Tolmezzo. With so little civilisation on the road, truly no traffic, this isolation makes for an intimate drive; just the car and the road and hardly anywhere to even turn off. Why would you? Even the 160 litres of fuel that lightens my wallet significantly doesn't sour the day; the route can't get any better than this.

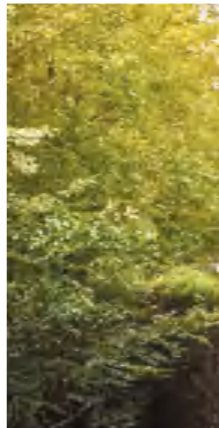


Day Four Katschbergpass Austria

Slovenia is a different matter though. Hordes of visitors spilling out of buses everywhere around Lake Bled spoil any driving in the popular area, but Slovenia is so small that within a couple of hours of looking around I'm crossing the vertical Wurzenpass back into Austria. I didn't figure for Wurzenpass, and it's second-gear engine braking all the way down a 20 per cent gradient drop.

Today's target is the B99 and the Katschbergpass on the other side. I settle for the quicker roads to make some headway and even though I'm on a well-travelled road (with three lanes in places) it covers so much varied topography you get every kind of corner you can imagine on one stretch. There's time to catch fifth gear through the open grazing lands. Up on the very top, which is crested quickly, the fat Touring tail is a laugh on the damp surface. Swinging it around hairpins makes me think of twerking.

Time and again I rev the S38 in third gear and it just hits right back with stabs of throttle, lurching the car forward instantly. It seems the big wheel has so many turns lock-to-lock but the front responds accordingly. You do have to really work the steering wheel, though, once you're travelling at speed. In 1993 cars like these were sensations with near-supercar power. Today that's normal, though all new sports saloons could learn a thing or two about driver involvement from an old M5.





Day Five Rossfeld Panorama, Germany

Every day the M5 keeps getting better, or maybe it's just the altitude. It does seem to be oiled up and raring to go and the Rossfeld Panorama road and 'my' BMW share happy memories.

In the Fifties BMW was rapidly nearing bankruptcy and its motorcycle market was lagging. In turmoil the company decided to bank on a vehicle unlike any it had ever made. The rear-engined BMW 700 was a success, though, and in 1960 some 35,000 were sold. It made sense to take this lightweight (tipping the scales at just 600kg) flat-twin trapezoid on wheels hillclimbing. BMW prepared a Works machine, the 700 RS, for the 1961 Rossfeld Hillclimb where the car made its debut with Hans Stuck, the 'Mountain King', behind the wheel.

Today I visit the Edelweiss Bergpreis, which is a motorsport journey back in time with suitably attired drivers and officials hosting a historic race up the Rossfeld Panorama with Ferrari 512Ms, NSUs and Lancia 037s lining up. Besides the race fans there's no one else around. Most of the road is still open as the Edelweiss Bergpreis takes in only 6km of the 18km circuit. Those not competing are doing what I'm doing: pretending to be Stuck tearing up and down in both directions maybe imagining some race numbers on the sides. A tandem pair blast down going the other way, a Carrera RS and an E30 M3, and we all smile in acknowledgment. Otherwise very few people give the M5 any attention, especially a debadged one, blasphemously dismissing this hand-built machine for a 525i on some rims.

History lesson over I tread through car-hating Salzburg where everything is pedestrianised (though I'm told it is a classic car town). A bit further on and it's Oktoberfest time and it's busy all around Munich by the time I near BMW Classic, where the M5 is due to be returned. The traffic's just an excuse to swing off the main roads and take the long way home, out of the confines of the highway's sound barriers to distress some cows with that orange needle hovering in the upper reaches of the rev counter.

E39 people may disagree but in 30 years of the M5 I think this one was the pinnacle. High up in the Alps it's given me a rush like no other M5 I've driven ●



LONGTERMERS



The M635CSi returns from having its Bilsteins fitted, David says a fond farewell to the F10 M5 and Andy Everett goes on a road trip to Scotland in his E36 Touring



F20 118d Sport

I've started thinking about what to replace the 118d with more seriously, now. The lease is up at the end of May and when ordering this car there was a three-month wait so I definitely need to have my mind made up and my order placed in February.

I did originally consider going for something big because I spotted a few deals within budget – an F10, for example, or even (whisper it) a Merc E220CDi but then I went and bought a Camaro and between that and my E39, there's simply no room for another large car, so it's going to have to be something more conservatively-

E24 M635CSi

After last month's debacle where I supplied BM Sport (020 8304 9797 or www.bmsport.com) with the wrong springs I'm pleased to report the M6 is back on the road and now sporting its Bilstein shock absorbers mated to OE springs from BMW. As ever the work was efficiently performed by BM Sport and fortunately the team there didn't discover any other nasties while they pulled everything apart and put it back together again... there's always that nagging feeling that as soon as you disturb something on the car you'll open up a whole can of worms and find your wallet emptying faster than an E60 M5's tank at full chat. The joy of fitting either OE parts or high-quality aftermarket items such as the Bilstein B6s is that everything fits first time around and there's no messing about trying to force parts to fit properly.

Suffice to say I was delighted to receive the call that the M6 was ready for collection and couldn't wait to try it out. Typically on the morning of collection it was cold and wet and not the ideal conditions for testing out new suspension – the last thing I wanted to do was to experiment with some 'energetic' coming and leave the road backwards through the nearest hedge but on a gentle lobe to the office all seemed to be fine – the motorway ride quality was as surprisingly excellent as it's always been and despite only attacking the few corners I encountered at a moderate pace I could tell that there was infinitely more control than there had been before.

Fortunately by the time I came to drive home the roads had dried out

and I was able to experiment a little more and took the long way home, using back roads where possible to avoid the worst of the traffic. As road tests go it wasn't perhaps the most inspiring route possible but it certainly told me what I wanted to know – the Bilsteins and the new springs were definitely money well spent.

There's less body roll than there was before – the mudflaps no longer scrape along the ground when attacking a corner enthusiastically – and I now feel more in control than I did before. It used to lurch its way over on to the bump stops when coming rapidly and felt very unsettled when approaching the limit but now I feel that the feedback I'm getting from

the chassis is more lucid and I have more of an idea when I'm reaching the limit. All-in-all I'm a very happy bunny, especially as it also rides the speed bumps in my local area with far more aplomb than it ever did before. I find I've been using it more often too; I just have to be careful I don't use too many of those precious limited miles on my classic insurance policy before the summer comes!

My winter storage has also finally come to fruition so I have somewhere safe to tuck the car away at night

which is great for my peace of mind, even if the garage is a little smaller than I was expecting – if the car was an inch longer and an inch wider I'd really struggle to fit it in!

Despite the expenditure I'm very happy with the way the Six drives now, the only problem is that as I'm now cornering rather more enthusiastically I'm going to have to get the slightly dodgy driver's seat sorted out before the backrest comes away from the base!

Bob Harper



E24 M635CSi

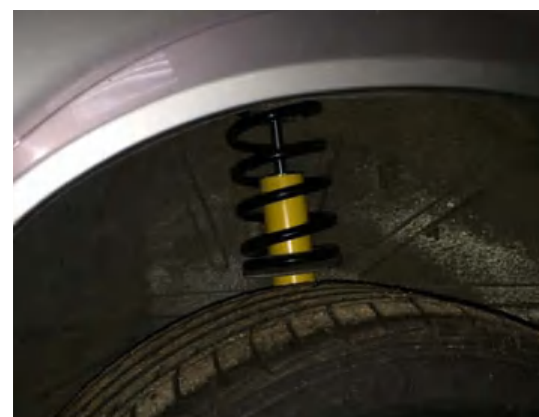
YEAR: 1988

MILEAGE THIS MONTH: 78

TOTAL MILEAGE: 163,069

MPG THIS MONTH: 21.7

TOTAL COST: £1325 (Bilstein B6 shock absorbers, OE springs, labour)



sized. To be honest though, that's fine with me as I've already got two big cars and don't really need anything bigger than the 1 Series anyway.

As I'd considered moving away from BMWs for a Merc E-Class, I figured I might have a look and see what I could get in budget from some of the other manufacturers about. The Korean contingent was quickly discounted as the engines on offer are too small and lacking in power for my wants and needs, and so SEAT and Skoda were considered. I was intrigued to see that I could get my hands on a pretty-much fully-loaded

Skoda Octavia vRS diesel, with the 184hp 2.0 engine. It has won awards left, right and centre and the spec list is extremely impressive, but... well, it's just not a BMW. For all its vRS badging and sporty accoutrements, it's still less powerful than the 20d engine family and while you are getting a lot of car for your money, I don't really want that much car.

So, swinging back to the BMW side it didn't take me long to find a front-runner, that being the 2 Series. I drove one back from Spain with the editor a couple of years ago and was very impressed. It will basically feel

like my trusty 1 Series, whilst looking a little sexier. Admittedly, the spec may not be quite as high as you would get on the Skoda and I don't know if I'll be able to find a 220d in budget (I could only find 218ds at the time of writing), but that'll still feel like an upgrade thanks to the slight increase in power, increased fuel economy and improved standard spec levels. If I do manage to get a 220d that'll be a pleasant bonus, but I'll be happy either way. I'd also say the fact that I am more than happy to potentially spend another three years in a car very similar to the one I've

been driving for the past three speaks volumes about the 1 Series.

Elizabeth de Latour



F20 118d Sport

YEAR: 2013

MILEAGE THIS MONTH: 575

TOTAL MILEAGE: 20,366

MPG THIS MONTH: 49.2

COST THIS MONTH: Nil



E28 Alpina B9

I predicted that the festive period was likely to be busy in the Stiling household but boy did I underestimate it! A spur-of-the-moment decision saw me advertising the CLK55 AMG for sale and four days later with the asking price secured it was sold. Given it all happened a bit quickly I needed a new daily driver so I drafted in the ultimate 'daily smoker' in the form of a 1996 E39 528iSE. It's a fully loaded car with heated, electric leather Comfort seats, auto gearbox, electric steering column, sunroof, 16-inch alloys and, rarely, M Sport suspension. With only 79,000 on the clock and just 40,000 on the non-Nikasil engine BMW replaced under warranty it's a gem of a find.

The idea was to use the 528i until I found a suitable Mercedes CLK63 Black Series to buy, but given it's me; you probably won't be surprised to hear the plan has changed slightly. Instead of 'The Black' I've bought an Italian Stallion in the form of a gorgeous, Maserati Gransport. Given

this is *BMW Car* I won't make too many comments, I'll just say that I'm very pleased with it.

This leads us to the Bavarian section of the stable. I'm pleased to report I've finally got round to servicing the B9. It shouldn't have taken me so long especially as I had already purchased some of the service items and just forgot I had them stored in the garage. I've said it before but E28s are great cars to do some DIY maintenance on so an oil change, oil filter and spark plug change is something you can do at home with only basic tools to hand.

The first job was to change the oil which is very simple. The sump plug came off without any issues and out came a sump full of warm, black engine oil. It was pretty nasty and it really should have been changed a while ago based on time rather than mileage. I'm not quite sure if mineral engine oil (which E28s require) absorbs more carbon and deposits than fully synthetic oils but I won't be

leaving it so long next time.

Given the colour of the old oil I decided that rather than fit the Genuine BMW oil filter and Valvoline VR1 Racing oil I already had I'd buy some cheaper alternatives to use this time almost as a 'flush'. This does leave me needing to perform another oil change soon but that's no problem. Having said that, upon checking the dipstick after filling with the new oil it looks an immaculate golden colour (see pic) so I'll see how long that lasts for before dropping the oil as there's no point in dropping golden coloured oil just for the sake of it.

Fitting the new oil filter was also a doddle with the canister being easily accessed to the right of the engine block, at a back-friendly height (sorry Bob I couldn't resist).

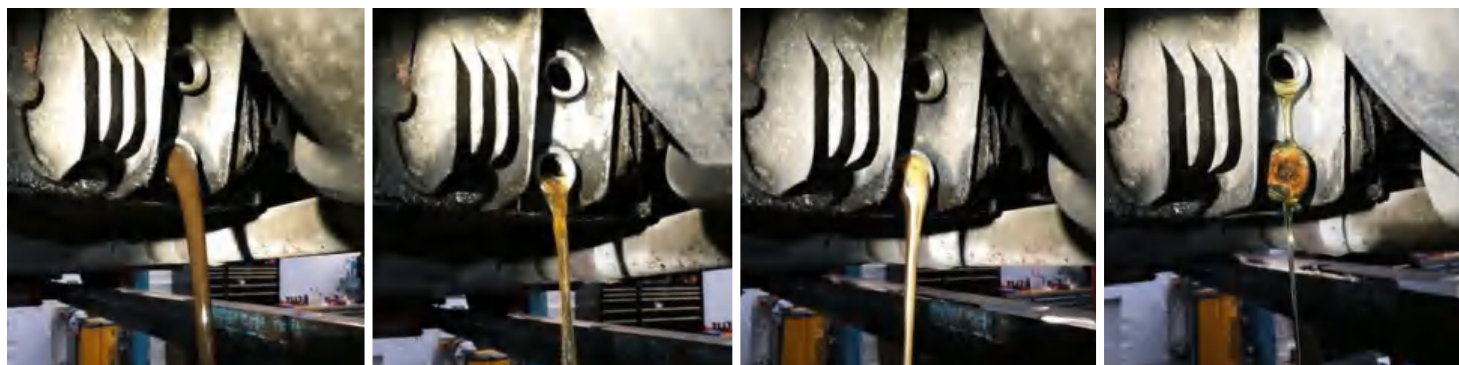
The old filter was a genuine BMW part but had clearly worked past its intended shelf life as the 'sleeve' that wraps around it had broken up and was in pieces. Again, lesson learnt and

it won't happen again for sure.

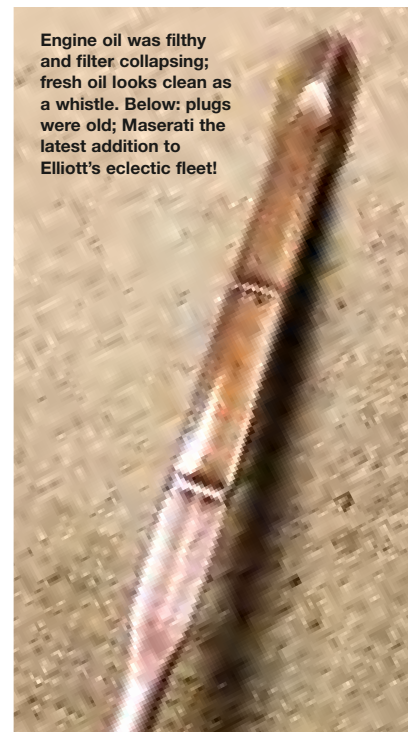
The next job was replacement of the sparks plugs. Once I'd found the correct socket and extension combination the first five plugs were easy to fit. You just remove the throttle body from its resting place on top of the engine block and you can get straight at the spark plugs without much hindrance. The sixth plug nearest to the chassis bulkhead is harder to access as part of the braking system resides nearby so there's less room to work with but you soon find a knack to it. As you can see from the pics the plugs were long overdue too.

With fresh parts fitted, the difference the service has made to the engine is incredible. Given the state of the outgoing parts maybe that shouldn't be too much of a surprise but the engine is noticeably quieter and smoother and pulls with a slightly keener edge.

I mentioned a few months ago a sort of graunching/knocking sound coming from the rear of the car once



From left to right the four stages of Elliott's B9 differential flush: dirty old oil, flushing agent, foamy and dirty oil after the flush, the refilled fresh oil looking beautifully clean



Engine oil was filthy and filter collapsing; fresh oil looks clean as a whistle. Below: plugs were old; Maserati the latest addition to Elliott's eclectic fleet!

hot and that I thought it could be coming from the diff. So, in this period of TLC I decided to have the diff flushed and treated to some fresh oil. This isn't something that is easy to do at home so I decided to enlist the help of a BMW Specialist garage near to my office called Hardings Garage in Penwortham (www.hardingsgarage.co.uk). Funnily enough the garage owners recognised my name and remembered working on my 135i Coupé when they both worked at the main BMW agent in Preston. One of them actually fitted my BMW Performance exhaust at the time and the other serviced the car a couple of times.

The process involved dropping the old oil and then using a flush to get into all the nooks and crannies. They then refilled the diff, ran the car and dropped the new oil out (along with all the foamy stuff you can see). They then refilled once again with new oil and voilà – a clean diff. We will have to see what difference it makes but as you can see from the colour of the old oil it was a job worth doing and a fairly cost-effective one at £150.

Before collecting the car I received a call to ask whether I knew that the MoT was due to expire the day after! No I didn't but that was good timing so I asked Hardings to put a fresh MoT on the car.

I'm pleased to report no issues apart from the front suspension struts being loose for some reason, so after a thorough check of all the front end components and tightening those that needed it, HEX 991Y was issued with

a brand-new MoT – not too bad for a car that's past its 30th birthday hey?

In other B9 news I've finally found someone to do the welding work on the rear arch and boot. It's a chap who specialises in the restoration of classic cars and was recommended to me by the guy I bought the car off funnily enough. Whilst he's based near Milton Keynes, some 190 miles from my home, I often work in MK and central London so it's not too much of an inconvenience.

As I type this the car is tucked up in his barn alongside a classic Ferrari that's undergoing a full body restoration. I'm not really sure how

long the work will take and I've been here before where jobs that should be a few weeks end up being a few months, so we will just have to wait and see...

This month's last expenditure on the Alpina has been to reinsure it. Finding insurance last year was something of a pain as no-one seemed to have an E28 B9 3.5 listed on their systems, and we all know what happens when the computers say no...


By shopping around this year and persevering I've managed to halve my premium to a very reasonable £175 through Footman James. This includes increasing the guaranteed value to £10,000 (I'll increase it again once the body repairs are done) and includes a 'nil salvage cost' product whereby I would get the car back for no cost even after the pay-out should the car be written off. Given how hard it is to find genuine B9 parts I

thought this was a nifty little add-on.

I somehow doubt I will have the Alpina back from the restorers by the time I write again next month, but I'm busy with the M3 which has exhibited an issue with the SMG 'box. I'm fairly sure I've worked out what the issue is and more on this next month. It could be a fairly expensive one.

Elliott Stiling





E28 Alpina B9

YEAR: 1983

MILEAGE THIS MONTH: 192

TOTAL MILEAGE: 138,404

MPG THIS MONTH: Not sure

COST THIS MONTH: £402.64 (diff flush & new oil, £150; insurance, £175; MoT, £40; plugs, £37.64). Oh, and a Maserati



David with his M5 on the day it left the fleet. Below: considerably shinier the day he picked it up nearly four years ago

F10 M5

Having owned it for just under four years and 60,000 miles, I have finally replaced the M5. I have loved every last bit of my time with the F10, but I was ready for a change.

The numbers? Well, I have sat down with a large glass of wine and a calculator and they look like this. Anyone with a nervous disposition should probably sit down now...

The M5 cost £82,000 new, after discounts. Trade-in value at 60,000 miles was £30,000. That's £52,000 in depreciation. Fuel costs were £11,845.53, at an average of 21.97mpg and an average of 396 miles per tank.

Additional costs of oil, brakes, tyres, screen wash, roof racks and

accessories, windscreens, plus of course insurance, road fund licence and accident repair were more than I was expecting. I am glad I sat down for this one – £16,324.32. A couple of windscreens, and my deer incident contributed around £6k of this, and items I chose to purchase, such as bike carriers and snow chains added around another grand. So even without my penchant for BMW-branded bits of kit, and an accident, the cost of brakes, tyres and legal requirements ran to around £9000 over four years.

As you can see, the costs of running a M5 are supercar big. The depreciation, at just under a £1 per mile is the biggest killer, but that

should be less of an issue for whoever buys the M5 next. At £30k it's a bit of a bargain for the amount of performance on offer. The running costs will remain roughly the same though, so budget 3p per mile for tyres, and nearly 1p per mile for oil, 20p per mile for fuel. VED was £485 per year and insurance for the final year was just over £500.

All-in, including depreciation, fuel, tyres, insurance, oil and road tax the M5 has cost me £1.34 per mile to run during my ownership. Has it been worth it? I would have to say yes. I can't think of another car that would have done what I wanted the M5 to do any better. If you need a fast four-seater, they really come no better, or more reliable.

I was sad to see the M5 go, as it has served me so well, but I got a good trade-in, and didn't have to repair any of the recent rear side damage, so the time was right.

What has replaced the M5? I tried to make an i8 work but sadly its boot is simply too small for me. So, as the kids are a little bit bigger now, and don't need bulky kids seats, I have been thoroughly predictable, and headed back to Porsche and bought another 911.

David Ingram-Hill



F10 M5

YEAR: 2012

MILEAGE THIS MONTH: 464

TOTAL MILEAGE: 58,965

MPG THIS MONTH: 21.0

COST THIS MONTH: Nil

F30 320d Sport

KP12's rear discs look better now, but they're still not quite right. The situation is improving though, so I'm content to leave it a few more weeks and as mentioned previously, the worst case scenario is I'll need to get new discs and pads replaced before the car goes back to BMW. At just shy of 200 quid, I can swallow that. One is assuming that I'll otherwise be charged for replacements, which seems reasonable.

I still haven't arranged to do anything with the roof, but I'm waiting for the weather to improve, with the idea of getting a local valet to have a go at it first. The car will need a jolly good clean both inside and out before it goes back, anyway.

I yet again forgot this month that checking tyre pressures will inevitably lead to the iDrive throwing a hissy fit the following morning if one doesn't reset the pressure monitoring system. Sure enough, the dashboard lit up like a Christmas tree one Sunday morning claiming all four tyres had just gone pop having attached them to the local garage's pump the night before. Cue some momentary head scratching before the realisation dawned. Again. Having done it twice in recent months, hopefully it will now be a case of third time lucky. At least it means the pressure monitoring system works properly.

I had a quick splash-n-dash trip over to Brussels for the 2016 Auto Salon this month (£80 return with BA), ostensibly to help a Belgium-based friend spec his new F-Pace Jaguar whilst the salesman plied us with beer and 'schnacks' but in actual fact it was rather nice to have a wander around and see what was new. There wasn't time to investigate every stand in detail but a nose at the BMW bike selection was pleasant enough, plus we had time to ogle the Alpina B6 Bi-Turbo Gran Coupé, which looked utterly stunning, if sadly, rather





hidden away. It also occurred to me that, since we are starved of motor shows here at home, and considering the proximity of the European capital, I'm surprised more isn't mentioned of the Auto Salon in the UK press. I daresay the presence of both Frankfurt and Geneva shows have something to do with this, plus there never appears to be many big reveals at Brussels (although the F-Pace was drawing a massive crowd). But I would still question why it doesn't receive more exposure. It was heaving on the day and is clearly quite popular. I hope it continues.

Back to KP12, and we're just treading water now of course, waiting for the arrival of the new F10. Word from North Oxford BMW, as I write this in late Jan, is that the car is built and 'awaiting carrier' to the dealer. At least there are loads of things going on at home and at work between now and late March to keep my mind off it. Scotland at half-term, where we intend blatting between Edinburgh and Dundee in a rented Ford Fiesta, and which for some unfathomable reason I am quite looking forward to, weather-permitting, plus a US work

trip at the start of March. But considering it'll be nearly another two months before I take delivery I'm going to have to try and find some patience from somewhere.

I'll do a full end-of-term report on KP12 for the April issue, but for now I'm enjoying the last couple of thousand miles in what has been a pretty reliable and enjoyable car to own. It's no 740, not even a 750, not to mention an M5 (or two), all of which preceded it of course, but as a means of getting the job done at a time when that's exactly what was needed, it fitted the bill perfectly. I'll enjoy the F10, but I will miss the F30.

Mark Williams (@QuentlyBentin)



F30 320d Sport

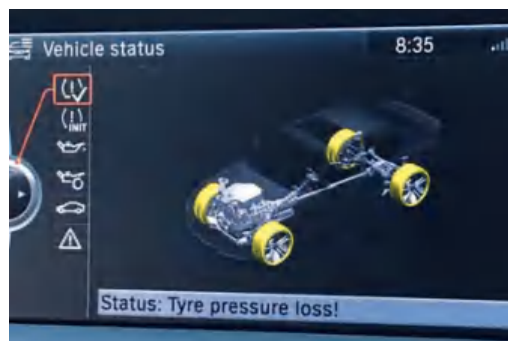
YEAR: 2012

MILEAGE THIS MONTH: 2214

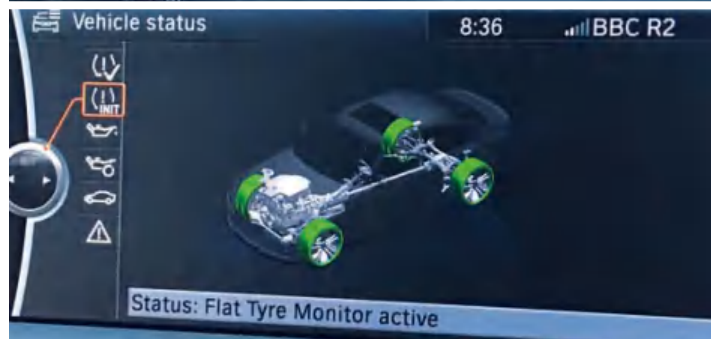
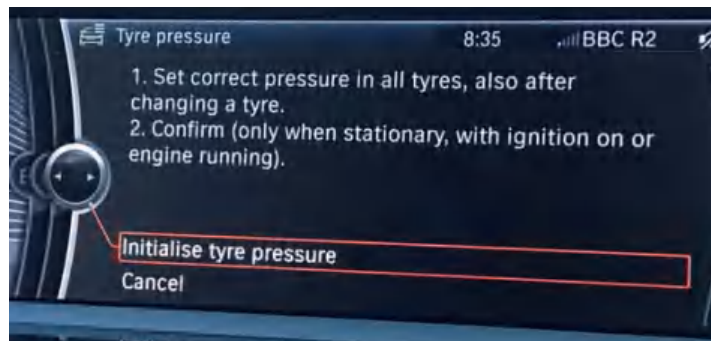
TOTAL MILEAGE: 53,635

MPG THIS MONTH: 45.1

COST THIS MONTH: Nil



Resetting the tyre pressure monitor is slightly long winded when you've forgotten to do it after topping up the pressures...



Jaguar F-Pace looked good at the Brussels Auto Salon but nowhere near as alluring as the Alpina B6 Bi-Turbo Gran Coupé

E92 M3 Track Project

In my last report I was pleased with both myself and the car after the track day at Spa. As my confidence was growing in the car I was getting to the point where I could begin to pick out some setup flaws in the chassis. There was still a feeling of lightness on the faster sections and the rear of the car didn't feel as planted as the CSL mentioned in previous reports.

After some heavy research, Raeder Motorsport at the Nürburgring was mentioned several times as being one of the best workshops in the area and after closer investigation it turned out that the main man in charge there is VLN Race-winning champion, Christoph Breuer. When you go to the Nürburgring there are hundreds of BMWs roaring round, but only one or two companies are associated with the really fast cars in 'Tourist Time' – one being an E92 M3 set up by Raeder that has completed a 7:05 BTG (Bridge to Gantry), so discovering all of this, I knew that it was going to be the one to help set the car up.

So I called Raeder and spoke to Christoph and explained that the car didn't feel 100 per cent and that it felt loose at the rear and not as planted at high speed as I'd like it to be. He said that if I booked it in with him for a full geometry setup he could guarantee it would be money well spent!

In between all this digging about, I had also spoken to KW UK about shock settings and it suggested Raeder Motorsport. As it turned out, Richard at KW UK was going to an RMA track day with the KW stand and would have technicians on-hand to assist with the car's setup and suggested that I should

come along. So I booked the M3 in with Raeder for the afternoon before the RMA day in the hope that the car would be set up as close as possible, so that any further adjustments would just be minute tweaks.

So when I arrived at the 'Ring, I duly dropped the car off to the most beautiful, clean, modern and professional workshop I have ever laid eyes on! It puts BMW main dealers in the UK to shame with how clinical it is. I was greeted by Christoph Breuer who asked what I wanted from the car and so I explained that I wanted it setup solely for the Nürburgring, clarifying that I wasn't bothered about how it drove on the road or any other track in the UK, providing it was perfect for the Nordschleife! At that point, he cracked a smile and confirmed it would not be a problem. I hung around for a while absorbing the sight and sounds of all the other race car builds and customer cars being setup or having modifications done – there were some real monsters in the making and I could just tell that this place meant business.

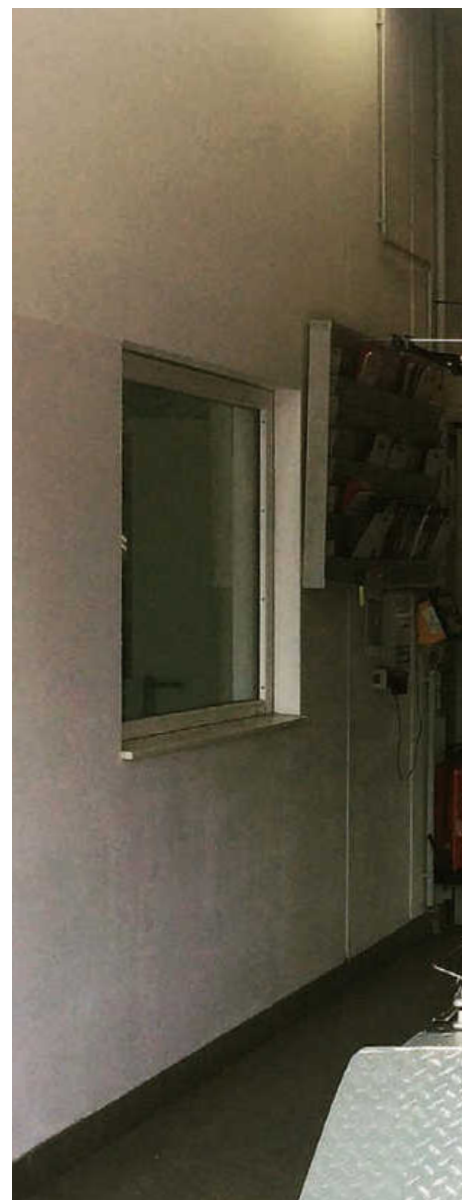
After a short while I went back into Christoph's office and he mentioned that the damping was already set to more or less the settings it would use so I suggested that if he could see any improvements to be made on the geometry he should feel free to do as he wished. I then noticed the particular person who was working on my car was scratching his head and while he was corner weighting the car he kept coming back and forth, front to back adjusting a little here, though without getting the results he clearly

wanted. He then got a bit of paper, wrote down the corner weights and took it into Christoph's office. Christoph took one look at the figures, walked out to the corner weight machines, pulled one plug from the front left and one from the back left, swapped them round and smiled, looked at the new figures, smiled again and went back to the office. I found this very amusing as it was an easy mistake to make.

Once it was all set up, a print-out sheet of the car was given to me to show what the previous settings were compared to the new settings. The new camber settings looked very aggressive, the front ride height was left where it was but it was lowered a further 10mm at the rear.

The biggest change was to the rear passenger side of the car. It was toeing out, which would make the rear of the car want to overtake the front (no wonder it felt loose!). When Christoph saw this figure he asked me if I really drove it like that on Nordschleife, when I confirmed that I had, he laughed saying it must have been a very crazy car to drive. They set the rear of the car with 4mm overall of toe-in on the rear. When he told me, I thought that was really excessive but he explained that as the rear of the car compresses the geometry changes and with these settings the rear wheels should be parallel with the fronts.

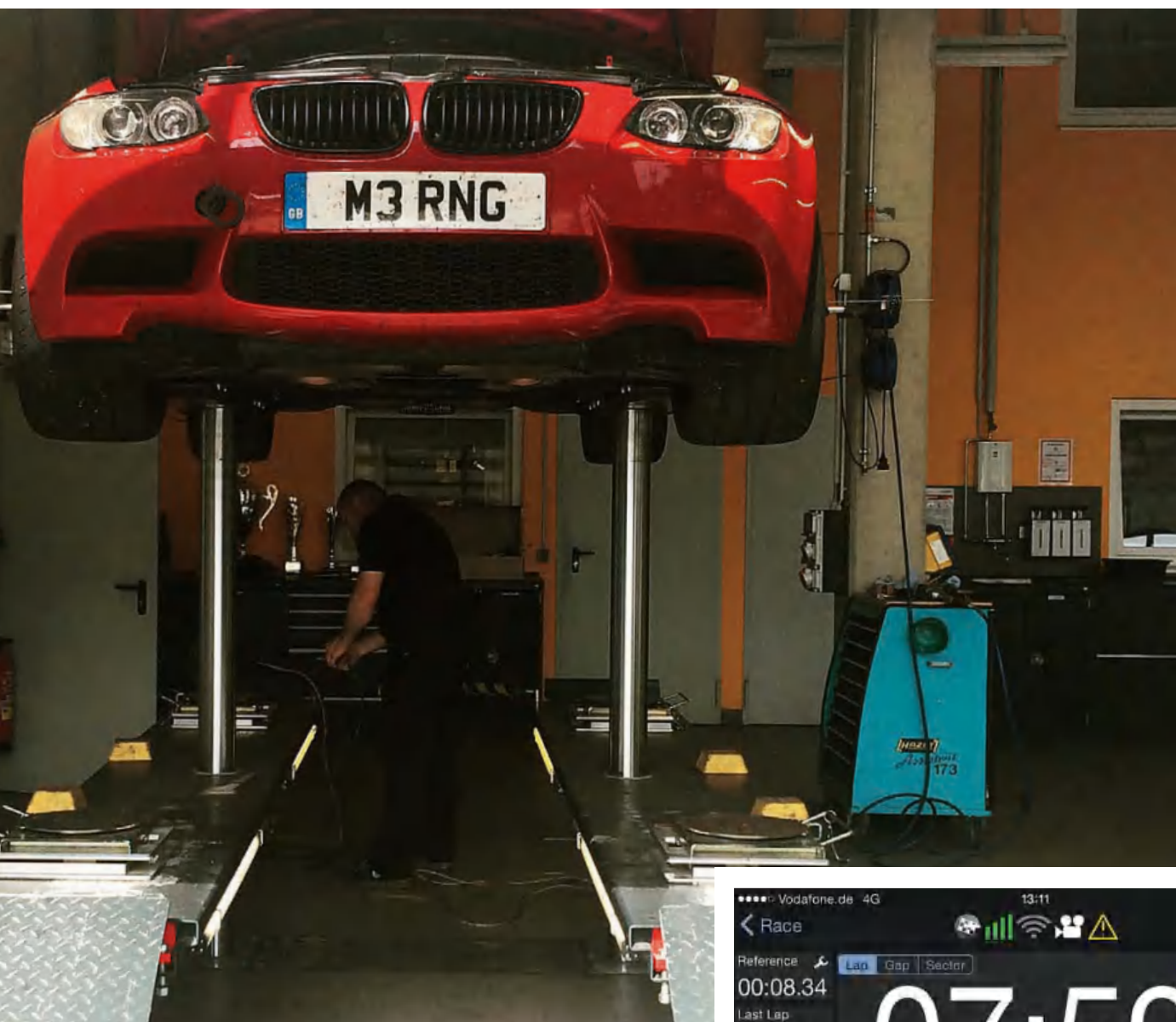
I was happy so far but a little bemused about the shock setup as after looking at the paperwork, very little had been altered, only the front made a fraction stiffer. From my



research I knew if you stiffen the front of this car up any more it will understeer but lowering the rear and with the geo setup Christoph assured me this would compensate.

I did ask why they only altered the low speed compression and not the high speed or rebound? His reply was that it did not need it and whoever set the damping up on the car originally had done a good job! I was quite flattered, but still a little apprehensive as I had convinced myself it was the dampers that made the car feel like it was a little bit floaty on the fast sections. Christoff assured me it would be okay and to go away and try it and if I didn't like it, to bring the car back and they would try some other settings...

So the next day I was on track the minute the barrier opened and instantly noticed that the rear end of the car felt absolutely amazing even



An impressive sub-eight minute Bridge to Gantry time at the 'Ring after some set up work at Raeder Motorsport

on my sighting laps to check out the track conditions and get some temperature in the tyres. When I started to push harder the rear end was so planted I could hardly get it to step out sideways on even the slow-speed corners, where previously the whole car felt like it wanted to try to swap ends. I did soften the front end off a little but after further inspection the tyres were shot, so much so that when I looked at the inside edge after this trip they were down to the wire. I will have to investigate a little more with a heat gun and read across the whole tyre to see what is really going on to see if the extra camber is actually needed.

Since Jeremy Clarkson went to the Nürburgring on *Top Gear* I have always been interested in the 'Ring and my goal was to crack ten minutes. That soon became nine minutes after almost cracking the

nine-minute barrier in a 136hp Suzuki Swift Rent4Ring car rental. Now with the M3, the goal has been to achieve a sub-eight minute time – on this trip with the new setup and added confidence in the car I managed 11 laps im just over the eight minutes, and then it finally happened, a 7:59.76. I must say I'm not an emotional person, but you would have thought I had won the Formula One World Championship. I was shell shocked, completely exhausted physically and mentally and I even parked up in the pits and nodded off for ten minutes. For me this was a great accomplishment and a day I will always remember. It didn't take long before I started to wonder what the car and I could do with some more modifications, maybe some more power or the addition of some aero – the saga continues...

Ben Cook





The Everett Fleet

It's official – the M43 1.8-litre engine is not as efficient as the 16-valve M42 unit. Despite getting a GPS and brim-to-brim confirmed 42mpg from the 318Ti on a Highland jaunt three years ago, the green 318i Touring didn't get past 39mpg. This, of course, is an average – fill the tank to the brim, set the trip to zero and, when the orange light comes on, brim the tank again and work it out from there.

Whilst most car speedos over-read, the trip mileometer on the E36 is uncannily accurate and tallies up with the sat nav perfectly – just 0.3 of a mile out over 100 miles. Oh well.

Even so, nearly 40mpg from a mid-Nineties 1.8-litre petrol estate car with four adults on board and a boot full of luggage isn't bad. This means that on the motorway cruising at around the legal limit it's doing low 40s and you can't moan about that. This is, of course, with the tall 2.65 318tds diff fitted that's just too tall – I'm on the lookout for a later 2.81 ratio unit.

Our holiday took us to the Highlands to show our foreign guests what the fuss is all about. Up the A1M from Sheffield, we went across the A66 to Penrith and then the M6/M74 to Glasgow, across the Erskine Bridge

then through Dumbarton to pick up the marvellous A82. This takes you to Crianlarich and whilst our hotel stop that night was in Oban, I stuck to the A82 rather than take the A85 to Oban. That way you get to see Glen Nevis in its astonishing beauty before following the road to the left of Loch Leven and round to Oban. We were lucky to have amazing weather, and the following day we went south a few miles before picking up the tiny B road that runs alongside the River Orchy, waterfalls and all, before picking up the A82 again and doing yesterday's trip at a more touristy pace as well as a drive

around the incredible roads around Kinlochleven. I've been coming here since 1981, it never changes and it never fails to astonish me how a place like this can be so close to the urban sprawl of the UK and yet feel so alien. From here we did Inverness, Nairn, the Cairngorms (the Bridge of Brown is spectacular) and Edinburgh where I dropped the girls off to shop whilst I went to a very good breakers in Inverkeithing to stock up.

The Touring behaved perfectly too, using no oil or coolant at all – just fuel and a bit of screen wash.

Andrew Everett



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E90 335i

Not a hugely popular model in the UK as most opt for the coupé shell but there's still plenty to like about the 335i Saloon

History

The 335i didn't join the E90 line-up until 2006 and when it did arrive it could be spec'd as either an SE or M Sport with price tags of £30,940 and £33,750 respectively. The engine was the twin-turbo N54 straight-six sourced from the Coupé, and in Saloon trim it was good for a 0-62mph time of 5.6 seconds for the six-speed manual or 5.8 seconds if equipped with the auto 'box. Economy was pretty decent considering the performance on offer – both models returned an official figure of 29.4mpg on the combined cycle and emitted 231g/km of CO₂. Equipment was slightly sparser back then than what you'd find on a new 3 Series today, but you still had auto air, cruise control, rear PDC and metallic paint. Fortunately for the used buyer many first owners upgraded to leather and also added items such as satellite navigation and most were also spec'd with the six-speed auto too.

There weren't a huge number of changes to the spec of the 335i over its production life but it's worth bearing in mind that as BMW's suite of EfficientDynamics technologies were added to the 335i its economy improved slightly, but most crucially its emissions dipped to 218 (manual) and 221 (auto) both of which reduce VED rates considerably.

In 2010 the 335i gained the new twin-scroll turbo N55 engine and while power was unchanged there was another improvement in economy and emissions, although this doesn't lead to a significant saving on VED. In February 2012 the E90 was replaced by the all-new F30 3 Series.

Why should you buy one?

There's something alluring about buying a wolf in sheep's clothing and there's no doubt the E90 335i is that. Most folk won't give it a second look, but this is a very quick piece of kit, all wrapped up in the same practical four-door shell that's usually home to a four pot diesel – the only give away with the 335i are the twin exhausts. And even then most people will assume it's the diesel version, and that's where the 335i really plays its trump card as they're considerably cheaper to buy than an equivalent 335d.

Diesels tended to be bought by those who needed to do a lot of miles and as a result the cheaper examples all seem to have high miles – 150k is not uncommon – but the petrols generally have lower mileage on them. And if you don't do a huge annual mileage the 335i could make a lot of sense, especially as they tended to be quite highly spec'd by their first owners.

Running costs

While there are a number of big ticket items that could throw up bigish bills the car's actual running costs shouldn't be too bad, but you will need to bear in mind this is a 300-plus hp sports saloon and if most of your miles are in heavy commuter traffic your economy figure won't be very appealing.

Early cars with the 231g/km emissions figures will cost you £490 to tax, but the later 218g/km machines are considerably better at £290, with the N55-engined machinery being the best of all at £265, although the auto is still £290.

Servicing shouldn't break the bank with the 335i listing on BMW's online service quote system offering the following prices: oil service, £132; oil service with microfilter and plugs, £404; brake fluid, £45; Vehicle Check, £50; front and rear brake pads £195 and £146 respectively.



What goes wrong?

There are several problems that you may encounter with a 335i and the one that seems to get the most coverage is the high pressure fuel pump as this is a very well-documented problem that will cost in the region of £680 to replace at a BMW specialist. Injectors are another weak spot as are coils and electric water pumps (£650 fitted), and they can also suffer from a build up of carbon in the inlet manifold.

Turbos also suffer from a rattle from the wastegate, and if the turbos are replaced with new BMW items this will almost certainly reoccur. Fitting modified items or having your turbos rebuilt by a company such as Turbo Dynamics will prevent the wastegate rattle from reappearing but it's not cheap – £700 for two turbo rebuilds plus the labour to remove and install them. New turbos from BMW are around £1250... each. Plus labour. For this reason we'd recommend buying a car from a specialist with a warranty that covers items such as these, or if you buy privately we'd recommend buying a separate warranty to cover such eventualities.



How much to pay?

There aren't a huge number of cars to choose from but take your time and one that ticks all your boxes will be bound to come along sooner rather than later. Prices start at about £7000 for a 100k mile M Sport (and virtually all cars were spec'd as M Sports), £8000-9000 should get you a slightly later machine with fewer miles, while £10-11k should see you behind the wheel of a 2008 car with less than 50k miles. At the top end of the market expect to pay around £13k for a very well kitted-out example with around 40,000 miles. We wouldn't want to pay more than this though as the next generation F30 335i starts at around £17k.



E90 335i M Sport

	N54	N55
ENGINE:	Straight six-24-valve, twin-turbo	Straight six-24-valve, twin-scroll turbo
CAPACITY:	2979cc	2979cc
MAX POWER:	306hp	306hp
MAX TORQUE:	295lb ft	295lb ft
0-62MPH:	5.6 seconds (5.8)	5.6 seconds (5.8)
TOP SPEED:	155mph (155)	155mph (155)
ECONOMY:	29.4mpg (29.4)	33.6mpg (32.5)
EMISSIONS:	231g/km (231)	196g/km (202)
PRICE (OTR):	£33,750 (2006)	£36,900 (2010)

Thanks to BM Sport (www.bmsport.com or 020 8304 9797) for the prices quoted in the What goes wrong? section

Verdict

The 335i isn't without its problems but provided you arm yourself with a warranty you shouldn't have too many surprises. The later N55-engined cars do seem to be a lot more reliable, too. When they're running right a 335i is a joy to drive – quick, discrete, relatively economical and very practical too.



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Reliable Five?

I'm a long time reader from Australia with a question: any thoughts on the E60 550i? I'm about to buy a very decent 2007 model but I think they have some nasty issues with coolant leaks and electrical gremlins. I'm pretty sure it'll be a great drive, but don't want unreliability to sully the ownership experience!

Andrew, Australia, via email

Always good to hear from our readers across the globe! A 550i certainly is a great drive with lots of performance, decent handling, room for passengers and luggage and capable of pretty decent economy for a 4.8-litre V8 when on a cruise.

It can suffer from electrical gremlins with its iDrive system, but quite often we do find that these can be cured by making sure the car has the latest software update – although that makes it sound like a personal computer! The real Achilles' heel is the coolant transfer pipe which has a cheap seal which fails leading to a huge four-figure repair bill if the factory recommended repair procedure is followed.

There are now companies which offer a repair kit for this... it's been very successful in the US where the majority of 5, 6 and 7 Series are fitted with this V8. So long as you're willing to do this sort of repair, or have a competent garage who can do it for you, then we reckon the 550i would be a great buy. Unfortunately it seems to be a case of when, not if, the seal on the transfer pipe will start leaking...



STAR LETTER

Fast, faster, fastest?

Would you be so kind as to arbitrate in an argument that I've been having with one of my BMW-loving friends? We're trying to agree on which is the fastest-ever BMW road car and I reckon it's the current 30 Jahre M5, while he says it's the M6 with the Competition Pack. Which of us is right?

Simon Jackson, via email

It all depends on the criteria you're using Simon. By fastest we're assuming you mean top speed, in which case all standard production BMWs are now limited to 155mph so you could argue that it's a

tie between a very long list of BMWs! If you live in Europe you can add the M Drivers package to your M5 or M6 as an option, which raises the top speed to 305km/h (189.5mph) so you're both correct. However, we'd argue that as you have to add an option to the car's spec they are no longer standard production BMWs... which means you have to search back in the company's history books to find the fastest car that it made before the blanket 155mph limit came into force. That makes the M1 the fastest, at 162mph, closely pursued by the M635CSi, at 158mph.

Stat query

Just a quick letter to say what a great magazine. I've been a subscriber since day one and love the variety of articles you cover. I was reading the article about the E36 M3 GT/Individual in the December 2015 issue and spotted a small error.

In the first part of the article it says "there were more changes under the skin, too. Springs were updated and there was an M strut brace at the front to give more rigidity to the structure, while the final drive was shortened to 3.23:1."

However, in the transmission and drivetrain section, it says "the ratio is 3.15 (sometimes wrongly quoted

as 3.23 – the ratio used on the six-speed Evo)." Could you clarify which statistic is correct? Keep up the great work.

Chris Tranter, via email

Well spotted Chris... fancy a proof-reading job? There does seem to be some confusion over the M3 GT's final drive ratio but having done a little bit of further investigation we reckon the 3.15:1 ratio is correct. Are there any GT owners out there with a handbook to hand who might be able to corroborate this, please?



Pipe dreams

I drive an E60 545i and recently had a problem with the coolant transfer pipe. The garage told me it was a massive job between £3000-£4000 to replace the pipe. They had a idea to fabricate a aluminium alloy pipe, cut at 45 degrees, placed in position and then soldered together – which seems to be working (job done in October). On reading your article on the E65 V8 7 Series (November issue) I discovered that you had done a replacement job just like mine. I would be very interested in how this was done?

Neil Gosling, via email

It was our technical guru, Andrew Everett, who carried out the repair on behalf of a customer Neil, so we'll hand you over to him: "I used a new BMW pipe and cut three-inches from it. I then obtained a 12-inch length of alloy (or was it steel – I forget!) tubing that went inside the BMW pipe with a decent sliding fit. I then cut the old BMW pipe out, cleaned up the area where the seal fits (where the

actual leak occurs) and fitted it with a trace of black silicon sealer at both ends. Before fitting, I had a five- or six-inch length of rubber hose (basically a straight section of radiator hose) on the pipe assembly. With the pipe fitted into position and fully fitted into the block, I refitted the three-inch section I'd cut from the new pipe. This was opened up, bonded onto the inner section using panel glue (it's never coming off again) and secured with two hose clips whilst the glue set. With that done, the clips were removed, the rubber hose section slid over the top of the whole centre 'join' section and secured with clips.

"So to recap – the alloy BMW pipe is fitted, now in three bits (two long, one short) with a removable centre section. The inner 12-inch bit of pipe gives it rigidity and the rubber hose is belts and braces to ensure it cannot leak."



Buying conundrum

I'm a frequent buyer of the magazine and love all that *BMW Car* do for what is the best brand on the market. Perhaps you can help? I find myself in a position to buy a BMW with a budget of €3500-€6000. I'm asking for guidance, basically. I want my BMW virginity to be taken by the right model with the right engine. I'm 20, living in Ireland (where insurance is monumentally high) and cover around 30k miles per year. The car will be used every day and, ideally, I'd like five seats and five doors. To give you an idea of how much it will cost me to insure a car over here, I recently received a quote of €3500 for a 2007 120d hatchback. My father and I service our cars regularly – he's a trained mechanic – so this should help with running costs.

Paul Joyce, Ireland, via email

It's always tricky to find the right car to buy when you're young and insurance is a huge consideration Paul, but we reckon you should either be looking at a 118d or 120d hatch, or possibly a 318d or 320d Touring. The 1 Series is a good choice as there's a plentiful supply, but there are a few big ticket items that can go wrong with the diesel engine, most notably the timing chain issues. If you could find an example that has had BMW's quality enhancement campaign already carried out then this may well be the car to go for.

However, we would also have a good look at the E46 3 Series Touring. While it's an older car it was perhaps built better than the 1 Series and you won't have the timing chain issue to worry about... although you would need to ensure that the engine's swirl flaps have been removed to make sure they're not ingested by the engine. While the E46 is now earning itself a reputation for rusty wheel arches this isn't a huge issue to sort out and we feel that a lower mileage but older 3 Series might be a better buy than the 1 Series.

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BMW Buyer

Our monthly roundup of what's hot, or not, in the BMW marketplace

Words: Guy Baker

More BMWs than ever are passing through the auction halls according to Rupert Pontin, head of valuations at Glass's: "The number of vehicles sold at auction during 2015 grew by seven per cent," he told us, "and early indications are that this trend is continuing into 2016." The increase in new PCP-based BMW sales over the last few years has fuelled a ready supply of one-, two- and three-year-old return stock. And as this supply of well-maintained nearly-new BMWs continues to increase you can expect to see a gradual long-term softening of second-hand values.

"Seasonality would normally see first-time conversion rates and values fall," Rupert confirms, "but the opposite has happened so far – with values holding, and first-time conversion rates are pretty firm." Volume sellers the 3 and 5 Series were at a healthy 79 per cent for first-time conversion, with X models and 7 Series achieving a 90 per cent plus first-time conversion.

Only the 1 Series has been faring badly, with the sheer number of convertibles currently available for sale leaving 24 per cent of 1 Series unsold after their

first pass through the halls. The unusually mild weather also seems to have kept most BMW showrooms surprisingly active too, with positive levels of retail transactions reported by almost all of the franchised dealers.

Looking forward, we expect values to hold – with some independent dealers and supermarkets actually suggesting they may need more stock to meet anticipated demand in early 2016.

BMW main dealers are now offering a £750 deposit contribution on their Approved Used Cars, if you buy the car on BMW finance – at a typical 10.9 per cent APR. This applies across the range, with some attractive prices at the moment on 5 Series and 5 Series GTs. £23,000 buys a 2013 520d SE GT,

whilst 2010 520d M Sport Saloons start at just £16,500. Online discounters meanwhile could shave a substantial amount of the asking price of a new 5 Series, with www.uk-car-discount.co.uk offering up to £5185 off a 520d SE Saloon, £7050 off a 525d SE Auto and £8286 off a new 535d M Sport Saloon.



Forecourt find M3 Saloon (E90) (2008-2013)

Latest M3 a little out of your price range? Never fear, you can now pick up a mint E90 model for the price of a 118i hatchback – complete with a rip-snorting 420hp V8 and more toys than you know what to do with. Press the loud pedal and 62mph arrives in just 4.9 seconds for the six-speed manual version, whilst standard equipment includes electric memory front seats, BMW online Assist, two zone air con, Professional Sat Nav with voice input control, leather

upholstery, Bluetooth, a CD player, cruise control and xenon headlights.

We spotted this mint, manual 2008 M3 Saloon – with EDC and 19-inch alloys – advertised at Sussex specialist James Paul for just £21,990. With just 52,000 miles and a full service history this Silverstone blue example would make an ideal choice.

www.jamespaul.co.uk

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Top three £10,000 efficient estates

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318d Sport Plus Touring (E91)
(2011-2012)

With 62.8mpg combined economy and a £30 a year road tax bill it's hard to argue against an E91 318d Touring. And although in Sport Plus spec there's more show than go, the 318d can still comfortably carry a heavy load long distances. £10,000 can get you a mint 2011 example, with around 80,000 miles under the bonnet.



320d M Sport Touring (E91)
(2010-2012)

Fancy a little more get up and go? Then choose a 320d Touring instead, in tasty M Sport guise. You'll still see a return of over 50mpg at the black pump, whilst road tax is a manageable £145 a year. Crucially though, the performance is more spritely, with an 8.3-second 0-62mph time. This budget stretches to a 2010 example, with 75k miles.



525d M Sport Business Edition Touring (E61)
(2009-2011)

The most capacious of the three, with an executive spec that includes heated leather seats, Professional sat nav, Bluetooth, cruise control and front and rear parking sensors. You can find fully-serviced 2009 examples with less than 100k miles for this price range. Annual road tax is £225, with a combined average fuel economy of 42.8mpg.



118d Convertible (E88)
(2009-2012)

Winter is traditionally a great time to buy a convertible, and there are some extremely good deals to be had on 1 Series Convertibles at the moment – with an oversupply of good examples driving prices down. We'd stick to six-speed manuals, with around £10,000 sufficient to buy a mint 2011 118d model with about 50k miles on the clock. Road tax is just £110, with 58.9mpg combined fuel economy and many examples boast a leather interior and 17-inch alloys, along with front foglights, a DAB/CD/MP3 player, Isofix anchorage points, a sports steering wheel, and heated washer jets.



BMW Car's lowdown on the latest prices paid for average condition BMWs at auction. To find your nearest auction house check out: www.british-car-auctions.co.uk



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Prices paid last month for average condition BMWs at auction

Model	Trim/transmission	Year/registration	Mileage	Price
330Ci	Sport Coupé, auto	2005/05	101k	£3550
330i	SE Saloon, manual	2005/05	75k	£4150
320Cd	M Sport Coupé, manual	2006/06	87k	£4200
X3	Sport, auto	2005/05	80k	£4250
118d	SE, 5 door hatchback, manual	2006/06	68k	£4500
330i	M Sport Touring, auto	2007/07	118k	£4900
X3 2.5i	SE, auto	2004/04	60k	£5200
X3 2.0d	SE, manual	2006/06	69k	£5600
118d	SE, five-door hatchback, manual	2010/10	61k	£6500
520d	M Sport Saloon, automatic	2008/58	64k	£8850
320d	M Sport Saloon, manual	2011/61	60k	£9800
316d	Sport Saloon, manual	2012/62	61k	£10,750
325i	M Sport Convertible, manual	2008/08	60k	£12,100
318d	M Sport Touring, manual	2012/62	67k	£13,400
535d	M Sport Touring, auto	2012/62	43k	£23,550

Prices quoted are hammer prices and will be subject to buyer's premium

Many thanks to John Warren Cars (www.independentbmw.co.uk) for its assistance with BMW Buyer

FROM THE ARCHIVE...

Another selection of back issues showing what we were up to five, ten and 15 years ago



March 2011

If you're of the impression that BMW's finest days were the ones in which it concentrated on making the world's best naturally aspirated six-cylinder engines then the first page of our *News* pages in this issue may well have made you weep. For it was here that we first announced the arrival of the new generation of four-cylinder turbocharged BMW powerplants... and now, five years later, the entire range has used forced induction for quite some time.

It didn't take long for BMW to slot its blown motors into every model in the range and even five years ago the writing was on the wall as our main

cover car, the 650i Convertible, featured a twin-turbo V8. We reckoned it was a fitting flagship to the range but wasn't perhaps quite as sporting as we were hoping it would be. If you wanted a sporting convertible with a BMW engine we would have pointed you in the direction of Wiesmann's MF5 Roadster that we'd also driven in this issue – it's still one of our all-time favourite performance cars.



March 2006

There was a definite performance bent to this issue of *BMW Car* with the first images of a still partially disguised E92 3 Series Coupé, the announcement of the Z4 M Coupé, a drive of the BMW-engined Ascari Ecosse, the ultra-rare E36 M3 R and, of course, our main cover story that charted the history of small sporting BMWs.

The new 130i M Sport hatch certainly had its work cut out as it was pitched against two icons: the 2002 Turbo and the E30 M3 Cecotto. We reckoned it was good but not quite good enough to stand up to the pair of older sporting icons. "Right now the One is a fantastic

car," we said, "but it's not quite the legend in the making. In this exalted company you need to be great – very good just isn't good enough." We reckoned it needed to be in a coupé shell and have items like a limited-slip diff to make it a true great. The most sobering thought, though, was the comment: "I could never justify spending nearly £30k on a spec'd up 130i when I know that for the same money I could have a nearly new 120d and an E30 M3, too." Those were the days...



March 2001

Another busy issue with a selection of machinery to drool over and our cover story compared two of the new face-lifted Fives: a 525i SE and a 530i Sport. This was our first chance to get to grips with the new engines and LCI changes and we were very impressed.

We were less happy with some of the colour reproduction in the feature as this was the very first time we'd used those new fangled digital pictures. Our repro company didn't know what to do with them and they looked very muddy and had a terrible colour balance... turns out they didn't even convert them to CMYK! Times have changed, though, and it's

now the case that our repro guys probably wouldn't know what to do if we brought them a whole load of transparencies and prints to use in the magazine. In truth the photoshoot didn't really do very well at all as our Art Editor who was assisting with driving duties for the shoot managed to damage the nearside front of the 530i... which is why the whole car wasn't on the cover! Arrgh.

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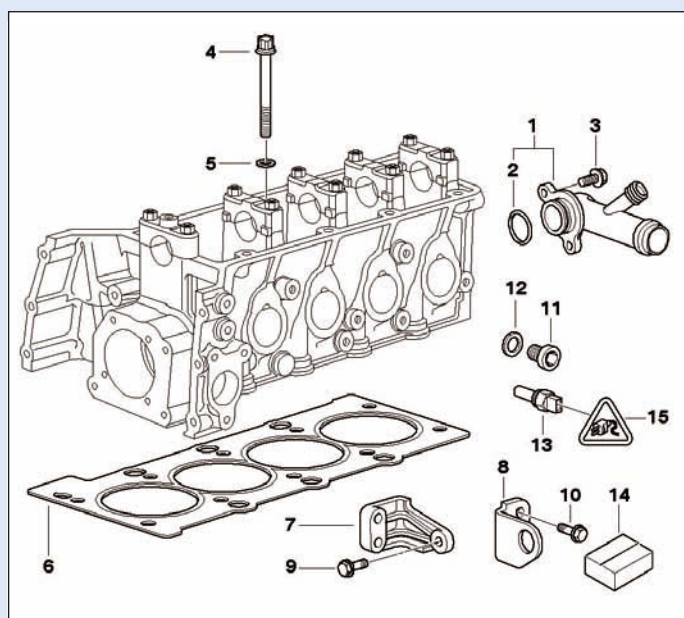
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Seal of steel

The days of failed head gaskets on BMWs seem to be receding now as the cars that were known for it gradually die off. These were the 1.9-litre E46 316i, the 318i M43, and the six-cylinder alloy-blocked M52 cars (such as the E36, E39 and E38, amongst others). In the old days, when these cars had a value measured in thousands, the proper repair was head off, head skim and pressure test (which probably involved drilling and 'timeserting' more robust HeliCoils in the block – all major aggro and not worth it on a sub-£1000 car. K Seal used to be regarded as the best 'fix' but Steel Seal (www.steelseal.co.uk) is even better as long as it's used correctly. Steel Seal comes with instructions, and the main one is that it must be poured down the top hose. If you just pour it into the header tank (where the rad cap fits on) it will not work. So you need to disconnect the top rad hose from the radiator itself (use an old towel to catch any antifreeze spills), shake the bottle and pour it in. The stuff is very effective, too. A local specialist to me had a customer with an R registered 523i Auto with the symptoms of head gasket failure – it would randomly overheat and the rad hoses were always rock hard and under pressure. The owner was about to give up on it but after a dose of this stuff it was seemingly cured. That was over a year ago and it's still going!



Old 1 Series – a good deal?

It's now 11 or 12 years since the first 1 Series appeared to astonished eyes, mine included. I went to the original launch at North Oxford Garage and there were raised eyebrows at the price list. There was, of course, a poverty model with steel wheels and no air-con but very few of those were sold – any BMW salesperson worth their salt would have (rightly) advised buyers to avoid a base model 116i like the plague. But despite the high prices the E87 sold very well and outstripped the previous E46 Compact.

But are they worth buying now? The cheapest 1 Series you'll find is a 2004 116i for around £2000, and that's a lot of money for an 11-year-old 1.6 hatchback with 150,000 miles. Watch out for noisy timing chains but at least it

doesn't have Valvetronic. The 118i is a much better bet, as is the 120d, but for anything decent you're into £2500+ and you're still the wrong side of 100,000 miles. Other problems? Not that many. 118ds eat diffs, plus you have the usual N46 engine issues, steering racks, rusty brake pipes and so on. But I was surprised to find that equivalent mileage Astras and Focuses aren't a lot cheaper and Golfs are often more money.

Your best bet? The 120d. Forget the petrols with timing chain and Valvetronic dramas and stick to the good old M47N engine, although you'll be paying £2500-3000 for a reasonable example. Remove the swirl flaps, replace the vacuum hoses and whilst you're going to need a new turbo one day, it's not

that big a deal. They're not as popular as the 118d but are faster, just as capable of 50mpg and are excellent to drive. Me? I'd always have the 320td Compact,

but can appreciate they're not everyone's cup of tea. The £279/£279 deal on a new one may be a better idea again.



F10 and F11 automatic shift problems

This is a rare one, but we heard about an F10 auto whose gear lever would not shift into D-S. This is not actually a gear lever at all; unlike the old five-speed autos on earlier E60s and so on, this is like a big switch that bolts into the tunnel and console. The same unit is also fitted to the F01 and F07 GT and, judging from RealOEM, is now on its third part number – it's currently 9251189 replacing 9239507 (Jan 2010 to Feb 2011) that replaced 9218104 from Jan 2009. There is no cable to the side of the gearbox, it's all completely electronic.

Given the number of auto BMWs on the road, these gear lever assemblies have proven remarkably reliable and you rarely hear of them fail, but the cars are still pretty new. Price? Pretty scary, as you'd expect at £700+, according to Rybrook's online parts website, but you should be able to buy a good used one for a lot less. Of course, a new or a used one will need coding to the car.

The gear lever issue is more common in cold weather and once the weather is warmer, it goes away. For anyone who has this issue, don't worry because it won't cause any damage to the gearbox itself.



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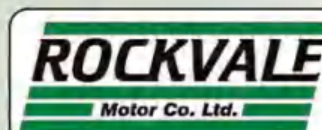
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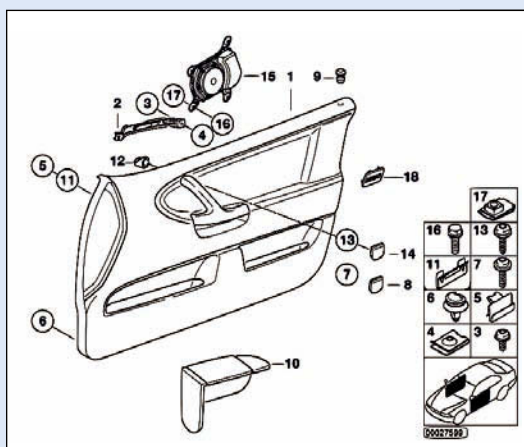


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E36 3 Series door card rebuild

Whilst the 1991 E36 was a step forward over the E30 in many ways, it must be said that those hateful door trims were of pretty grim quality. We've mentioned the window regulators before so we'll aim our abuse at the door trims this month!

On the E30, the door trim was a single sheet of board with holes punched out for the white popper clips to fit into, and a sheet of embossed vinyl glued on. Apart from the top section warping with age, they're pretty good. The E36 one, though, was a particularly badly-thought-out idea. The actual card is formed with curved edges, and to enable it to be fitted to the door, there are three sections (plastic or card) that are glued to the edges: one at the front; one at the back; and a long one at the top. Over time, these sections



unglue themselves and the door trims try to come adrift. To add insult to injury, the oddments bins also unstuck themselves, the two Torx screws that secure the centre of the trim to the window regulators loosen and the very bracket that the aforementioned screws pass through comes loose. Fancy a weekend

project? Then order a bag of 25 clips (part number 51411973500), four new screws (07147117570) and get cracking. The only substance known to man that will glue the errant bits back on is good old Araldite (which you can buy from Halfords) – nothing else seems to work. Buy the rapid set stuff. You will need

three packets to do both trims and a couple of pairs of Mole grips to clamp them on whilst it sets. Take care when doing the oddments bins.

Once they're reglued with new clips and the various screws are nice and tight, a previously loose and rattly feeling door will be transformed.



E30 conversions

A new name on the BMW modifying scene is BM Conversions UK, based in Staffordshire/West Midlands. Those who frequent the E30 Zone website will know Dan Harborow and also the quality of the work he's been turning out for the last few years.

It's not just the spanner work either, but the parts he manufactures and the solutions to seemingly impossible problems – making an E46 330i engine work in an E30 along with a functioning DSC is not a job for amateurs! Dan pretty much started the E46 rack conversions and makes both new PAS fluid pipes as well as the column to rack shafts with UJs. Exhausts, manifolds and rear axle beams with adjustable trailing arms are specialities of the shop. Even stuff like custom-made air-con pipes that

maintain a factory underbonnet appearance can be made. Engine builds, big brakes and lightened flywheels are all part of the product range and you only have to see Dan's own car, an Alpina 3.2-powered 1987 316 to see what you're dealing with – the attention to detail is astounding.

The good thing about Dan's engine conversions is that they retain the factory ECU and engine loom. Too many conversions have aftermarket ECU and wiring compromises to suit the car, and the end result is rarely brilliant. Dan's approach, however, is to alter the car to suit the engine, engine loom and ECU so that it starts, runs and drives like a factory product. Check out Dan's Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/bmconversionsuk.



N52 and N54 Vanos trouble

Anyone who has been reading up on these engines will be aware there is a known problem with regards to the dreaded 'check engine' light and Vanos.

The Vanos units themselves are generally okay but they require the correct amount of oil pressure to activate and advance/retard the camshafts. Oil from the pump comes up the front of the engine to the front cam bearing and is directed into the Vanos units. To stop oil escaping back past the cam bearing, and thus dropping pressure, BMW fitted metal sealing rings to the cam. This seems like a good idea but the problem is that over time (and as little as 25,000 miles) the rings (spinning at half crank speed on the cams) wear a groove into the alloy bearing ledges. Oil escapes past the groove, pressure drops and fault

codes are generated: 2A82 (intake Vanos) and 2A87 (exhaust Vanos) are two. But before you panic (it's a very, very expensive fix), you need to make sure the Vanos solenoids are not faulty. Read the fault codes again – if you also get 2A9A, 2A98 (inlet), 2A9B and 2A99 (exhaust) it's likely that a solenoid is faulty. At around £100 each they are not too scary price-wise and are easy to fit. You may just have your day saved!

Teflon rings are available as a repair if the cam carriers are not badly grooved, but it's about time someone came up with a cost-effective repair – maybe take a scrapped head and carriers, and machine proper grooves to take a Teflon seal to the hardened steel cam runs in the seal rather than the seal rotating and wearing into the alloy castings?

Next Month

First drive of the stunning M2

Plus

- 220xe Hybrid
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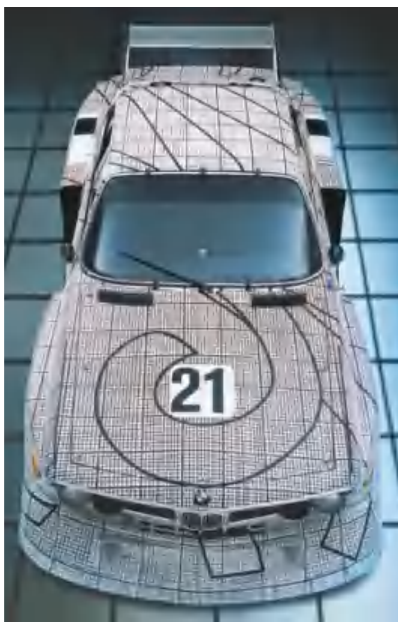
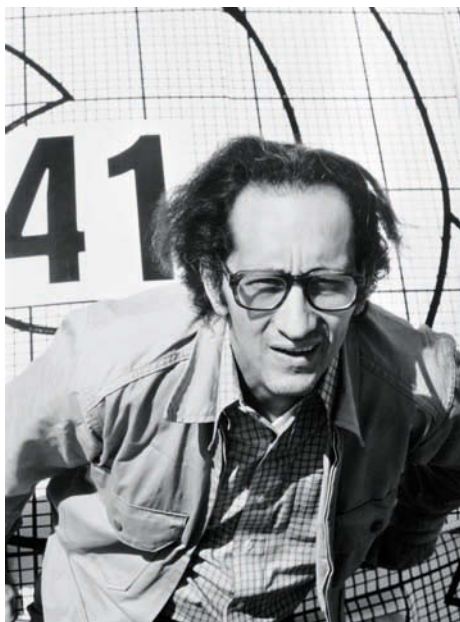
April 2016 issue available to download
14 March and in the shops 17 March.

(Contents subject to change)

BMW Art Cars

Frank Stella: 3.0 CSL

Never mind the fine artwork on the bodywork, underneath Stella's geometric lines this CSL packed a mighty turbocharged punch



The second of BMW's Art Cars was another CSL and technically this machine was the brainchild of the then-head of BMW Motorsport, Jochen Neerpasch. It came about as a result of rule changes for the 1976 season which would have seen the factory works CSLs effectively detuned for the more stringent Group 2 regulations which demanded a return to smaller aerodynamic addenda, wet sump lubrication, and most crucially, a banning of four-valve cylinder heads unless they were used in series production. Neerpasch didn't take this lying down and decided to strap a pair of turbochargers to the CSL's engine and take on the dominant Porsche 935s in Group 5.

In hindsight it might not have been the best idea as the car wasn't desperately reliable and in the end only raced three times at Silverstone, Le Mans and Dijon. The Stella CSL used a 3.2-litre version of the twin-cam, four-valve-per-cylinder M49 unit to which Josef Schnitzer attached a brace of KKK turbochargers and a Kugelfischer injection system. On the dyno it could crack 1000hp, but it was wound down to develop 750-800hp

in race trim in a vain attempt to allow the rest of the car to cope with these monumental forces that it had never been designed to withstand. There was no doubting that it was quick... but on its first outing at Silverstone it lasted just 14 laps before needing a new set of boots that had been vapourised by the engine's torque and by lap 43 it had retired with a melted transmission.

At Silverstone the car didn't yet sport Frank Stella's geometric patterns but BMW had seen how much interest the Calder CSL had generated at Le Mans the previous year so it commissioned Stella to paint the car for the 1976 running of the endurance classic. With longer gearing for Le Mans the CSL was a monster, allegedly pulling 212mph on the Mulsanne straight – drivers Gregg and Redmond must have

been absolute legends – and they managed to put it eighth on the grid. Sadly in the race the inevitable happened and it retired after 23 laps.

Its last outing was at the last round of the World Makes Championship which was held at the small Dijon circuit in September 1976. By now the turbo CSL sported a reinforced differential, gearbox and halfshafts and was back in the hands of Peterson (who had driven it at Silverstone). In qualifying at least, things at last seemed to be going according to plan as he managed to hold back the phalanx of Porsche 935s to take the top spot on the grid. Peterson led from the start and once he'd pulled away from Jacky Ickx's Martini 935 the boost was wound down until Ickx could maintain the same pace as the CSL but not catch it. However, even this approach didn't work and on lap 33 the diff turned into a casing full of swarf! A glorious failure then... but just look at, obscenely bulging arches, huge wings and that fantastic livery – what's not to like? ●



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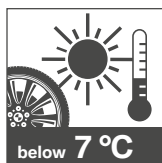
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